

# GOSPEL

FROM THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

## OF FREEDOM

### STUDY GUIDE

## 7. JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE - GAL. 2:15-16

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Justification by grace was considered the most important teaching in the New Testament by Martin Luther and the other reformers of the 16th century. Simply put, it's the idea that we are forgiven and declared righteous before God because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. The reason this teaching is so important is because we have the tendency to either want to take credit, or to feel as if the action of being made right with God (righteous) is something we must continue to secure. In either case the outcome is usually arrogance and pride or despair and failure, instead of thankfulness and love, for God. The doctrine of justification by grace, teaches us that it's God who is working and saving through Jesus' death, declaring believers, "just" (right with God) simply by His "grace" (His gift to us). Though this "salvation" is free to us, the cross cost God everything.

### EXAMINATION

- Read Galatians 2:15-21- How many times does the word "justification" appear?
- Why do you think Paul brings up this idea in the middle of describing his rebuke against Peter's act of hypocrisy?
- How does a proper understanding of this doctrine (teaching) of justification effect the way we live our lives personally and toward others?

### DISCUSSION

Since God did not accept us because of our race, gender, ethnicity, culture or religion, but rather through Jesus' death on the cross and his kind grace, we too can be accepting and loving to all. This doesn't mean we embrace false ideas about God, rather we expose them (Eph. 5:11), while accepting and loving those enslaved by them. Because we are accepted by God, we needn't feel threatened by others, even if they have the power to take our lives (Matt 10:28). Discuss the ways the church is prone to forget how we are accepted (justification) and as the result becomes exclusive, arrogant and critical to others outside. How can you avoid this trap?

### PRAY

- Pray for Calvary SLO that it would be known for it's love for God and others and it's commitment to God's word.
- Pray that God would help you to understand/grasp the teaching of Justification by grace.

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## GALATIANS 2:15-16

(Galatians 2:15-16) [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**.

Today, there's only one thing I'll be focussing on...the biblical concept, called **JUSTIFICATION** (we like big words at Calvary SLO)

### GOD: GOOD + RIGHTEOUS

Today we'll be starting with GOD as everything starts with GOD.

1. God as Creator (designer/architect, involved in the intimate details of all things)
2. God as King (sovereign ruler/leader over all things)
3. God as Law Giver (establishes an order)

Provides governing laws by which to live (rules of engagement)

-don't kill, don't covet, don't steal, don't lie, treat each other right

All society must have operation rules for there to be order, e.g.:

-Your home/family, Mall, Downtown SLO, AG, PASO, etc.

-Even the early American Settlement had "The Mayflower Compact" of 1620

-Restaurants, beaches, Cal Poly, work place, etc!

4. God as Judge (establishes universal justice)

(Psalm 50:6) The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge! Selah

(Psalm 96:13) before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.

(2 Timothy 4:8) there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day

God's law is written in two places:

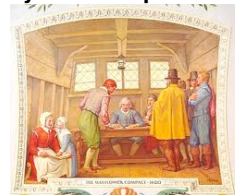
1. On our hearts (Romans 2:14-15)

2. In the Scripture (Romans 2:12, Acts 7:53)

God's justice and righteousness distinguish Him from false gods which are capricious, moody, temper-mental, unjust and therefore are unpredictable and unloving. The big Old Testament word for law is torah, which is mentioned in reference to God over 203 times.

Also, God himself even speaks of our relationship with Him in through the "legal" term of covenant.

...And by Virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general Good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due Submission and Obedience.  
-Mayflower Compact 1620



### PEOPLE: EVIL + UNRIGHTEOUS

All humanity is unjust, sinful and lawbreaking, both by our:

1. External actions
2. Internal motives

Our situation before God is really bad, so bad that the Bible teaches that we are:

1. Sinful in our very nature (Romans 8:4-5, Galatians 5:13, 16-24)
2. Totally depraved (Romans 1:26-29, 2 Peter 2:19)
3. Separated from Christ (Ephesians 2:12-13, 19)
4. Hostile to God (Romans 5:10; 8:7, Colossians 1:21)
5. Children of Satan (John 8:44)
6. Spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1-2)

[14] The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.

[15] And Jesus said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. (Luke 16:14; 15)

## PROBLEM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

God is righteous and we're not, and the term "righteousness" in the English typically means "being good" (morally), yet in the Greek it has more to do with being right w/ someone/somebody (relationally)

**Adam + Eve determined they would be autonomous** (self-governed, rather than obedient to God) as a result they lost their sense of: original rightness with God, original beauty, original peace

The question that's begged to be answered is:

**How could God possibly "make right" or "justify" us (declare just/righteous) w/o Himself becoming unjust by overlooking our sin (Exodus 23:7)?**

All unrighteous people deserve judgment (wrath in hell), God could have simply declared that no one would be made right or saved, because all are unrighteous sinners, thus God would have remained perfectly just in damning all who've lived.

## JUSTIFICATION

Since it was mankind that violated God's law and brought pain, difficulty, abuse, corruption, betrayal, suffering and death, it's by man that justice can be made and the debt repaid. Yet mankind is bankrupt with nothing of value to offer back to the Creator God who already owns all things.

### Man's Solutions: (broken + incomplete)

Justification cannot be accomplished on the basis of:

1. **Keeping God's Law:** because we've already broken it, and continue to do so
2. **Being religious:** because often the most moral people are the most prideful (pride was the downfall of the devil)
3. **Financial Payoff:** Because God's created gold in the first place, and doesn't need our money
4. **Hard Work:** God's not impressed by our entrepreneurial skills, artistic talents, mean guitar solos, good looks, expensive clothing

### God's Solution: (perfect + complete)

1. **God became a man** (Jesus)
2. **Jesus lived in complete compliance, both fulfilling & honoring God's law**
3. **Jesus willingly submitted himself to take the penalty of breaking the law** (though he himself never had)

**Adam is the representative head** for all humanity bearing, sin + death

**Jesus is the new representative head** for all believing humanity bringing, obedience + life

**(Romans 5:18-19)** [18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The Bible teaches that unjust/unrighteous sinners can be declared just or righteous in God's sight by being **justified**, or the action of obtaining justification (Romans 2:13; 3:20).

### Double transaction:

1. **God removes our sinful unrighteousness, forgiving us** through Jesus' substitutionary death in our place (zeroing out our debt)
2. **God imputes the righteousness of Jesus, to us** (giving us positive righteousness)

**(Romans 3:21-24)** [21] The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it [22] the **righteousness** of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are **justified by his grace** as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

**(Romans 4:5-7)** [5] The one who does not work but believes in him who **justifies** the ungodly, his faith is counted as **righteousness**, [6] just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: [7] "Blessed are those whose **lawless deeds are forgiven**, and whose **sins are covered**;

(Romans 5:12-21; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:8-9; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

At this point many feel this is scandalous and ask protestingly:

**"If God is *loving* how can he *judge* anyone?"**

yet, the real scandal is:  
**"If God is *just* how can he *welcome* anyone?"**



## BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION (HOW JUSTIFICATION AFFECTS YOUR LIFE)

Among the innumerable benefits God bestows on us because of His gift of justification are:

### 1. Forgiveness of all sins (Acts 13:38-39)

(Acts 13:38-39) [38] Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, [39] and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

### 2. Peace with God (Romans 5:1)

(Romans 5:1) since we have been **justified** by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### 3. Escape from God's wrath and condemnation (Romans 5:9, 18; 8:1, 33-34)

(Romans 5:9) Since we have now been **justified** by his blood, we shall be saved by him from the **wrath** of God.

(Romans 8:33-34) [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.

### 4. Spirit-empowered enablement to do good works + act like God (Titus 2:11-14; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21)

(Titus 2:11-14) [11] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

(2 Corinthians 5:14-21) [14] the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; [15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. [16] From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

### 5. Glorification (Romans 8:30) (2 Thessalonians 2:14 ESV)

(Romans 8:30) ...those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

(2 Thessalonians 2:14) To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## HOW TO RECEIVE THE GIFT OF JUSTIFICATION

### 1. Repent of our sin (1 John 1:9)

### 2. Believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10)

(1 John 1:9-10) [9] If we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(Romans 10:10,12-13) [10] For with the **heart** one **believes** and is **justified**, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved...[12] I for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. [13] For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

As we give ourselves in faith to Jesus, Jesus gives us his gift of righteousness. To receive this gift of justification by grace we need simply to, repent from our autonomy (sin) and trust (have faith) in God's solution.

## THE PHARISEE + THE TAX COLLECTOR (A PARABLE ABOUT JUSTIFICATION)

(Luke 18:9-14) [9] He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: [10] "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. [11] The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' [13] But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

"the doctrine of justification is the issue on which the church stands or falls and that any church denying justification by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone can no longer be called Christian."  
-Martin Luther

