

Title: **The Doctrine of Justification by Grace Alone through Faith Alone in Christ Alone (Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Solus Christus)**

Text: **Galatians 2:15-21**

Theme: Paul defines for the first time the heartbeat of the gospel of grace that was introduced in 1:4.

Question: Is it possible to be free from the burden of sin? Is it possible that a sinner can stand fully accepted before the God of all things created? Is it possible that my works have no saving merit before God? Is it possible that right now in my feelings of failure and inadequacy that I as a child of God am fully and completely accepted before my heavenly Father as I stand in His Son? Is it possible that when I “fell” out of bed this morning that I was right with God even though I did not take the time to read my Bible, pray and seek His face or even confess my sin and seek forgiveness? Is it possible that even now in all of my distractions and inability, I am right with God?

Answer: It is here in the great doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone that we will find our answer.

Introduction: Paul begins in 1:4, 5 to show how Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins in order to deliver us from this present evil age and all this happened according to the will of the Father so that He might receive the glory for ever and ever (1:4, 5).

It is here that Paul tells us how we can partake in this completed provision. In the autobiographical section of the letter Paul has established the divine origin 1) of his apostleship and 2) of the message he had preached to the Gentiles. The message he preached is not something man made. He now begins to unfold the great doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

“It is difficult to decide at what point Paul’s quotation of his rebuke to Peter comes to an end and passes into his general exposition of the principle at stake.” (Bruce, *Galatians*, 136).

Listen to the words of Martin Luther, “Satan [wishes to] take from us the pure doctrine of faith, and bring into the Church again the doctrine of works and men’s traditions. Wherefore it is very necessary, that this doctrine be kept in continual practice and public exercise both of reading and hearing. **Wherefore this doctrine can never be taught, urged, and repeated enough. If this doctrine be lost, then is also the whole knowledge of truth, life and salvation lost and gone.**” (p.21) He goes on to say, “It is also the principle article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consisteth. Most necessary it is therefore, that we should know this article well, teach it unto others, and **beat it into their heads continually.**” (emphasis added, p. 101).

What we are reading is Paul’s defense against the teaching of the false brethren that distorts the gospel and causes it to be something it never was intended to be.

1. They argue the Law must be maintained for initial and ongoing justification.
2. They argue the co-mingling of Law with faith in Christ.
3. They argue the keeping of Law in warring against sin.
4. They argue the keeping of Law in living for God.
5. They do not see the finality of Law in the cross work of Jesus Christ.
6. They do not see how the Christian life is the Christ-life.
7. They do not see the distinction between Law and grace.

What we now read in Galatians 2:15-21 is in direct response to the perverting of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE BIG PICTURE:

In considering the book of Galatians we can note a three-fold division.

- Chapters 1-2 = Personal/Biographical/Authorization/Vindication
- Chapters 3-4 = Doctrinal/Biblical/Presentation/Exposition
- Chapters 5-6 = Practical/Behavioral/Application

Its Eternal Value:

One's standing before God is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Nothing can be added and nothing can be subtracted without harming the purity of the gospel of grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The Problem:

"The person who can rightly divide Law and Gospel has reason to thank God. He is a true theologian. I must confess that in times of temptation I do not always know how to do it. The right separation between Law and Gospel is very important to know. Christian doctrine is impossible without it. Let all who love and fear God, diligently learn the difference, not only in theory but also in practice."

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 60-68. Commenting on Galatians 2:14.

The larger context for this quote has Luther wrestling with the application of Law(s) in general as a governing principle in society. He argues against the use of grace in civil situations. However, his observation is correct when he notes the necessary distinction between the two.

The Storyline:

God's redemptive purpose is singular. Although the elements of Law and Grace appear opposites they are not two separate stories. They are two chapters in one story. From before the foundation of the world He determined what a fall into sin and the resultant rescue from it would entail. He notes each phase or part on the straight line. From beginning to end His purpose is being fulfilled.

Questions:

Verse 15

1. What relationship does this paragraph have to what precedes it? Is this part of Paul's response to Peter or an expansion on the reason as to why Peter was wrong and how it applies to the error in Galatia?
2. What made the Gentile a sinner?
3. Did the Jew become a sinner in the absence of the Law?

Verse 16

4. Although Paul makes a distinction between the Jew and the Gentile, what is equally true for both according to verse 16?
5. Can the works of the Law justify?
6. What does this passage presuppose about his audience concerning justification and Law?
7. What is "justification"?
8. What is the "Law"?
9. What does Paul argue as the means of justification and the object that justifies?
10. What two principles are set in opposition to each other in verse 16?

Verse 17

11. According to verse 17 does personal justification produce sinless perfection in the justified?
12. Does my "post-justification" sinning negate my justified standing before God?
13. Is justification a license to sin?

Verse 18

14. If the Law cannot justify, can the Law sanctify? Note verse 18.

Verse 19

15. How did I die to the Law through the Law? What does the Law "do"?
16. What positive role does the Law have in my relationship to Christ? (v. 19)

Verse 20

17. What does the cross of Jesus Christ do to the "Law"?
18. What does the cross of Jesus Christ do to my "sanctification"?
19. What might the idea of "Christ lives in me" suggest?
20. Who forms the believer's new identity?
21. What is "flesh" in verse 20? Is it our fallen Adam nature or is it simply the physical body we currently live in?

Verse 21

22. Notice the link Paul creates between the idea of initial justification and what follows after the fact in verse 21. Is it possible to undo in my sanctification what God did in my justification?
23. Does Paul support the idea of divine preservation? What might be a biblical way of expressing the ideas of justification, sanctification, and "eternal security"?
24. What is the BIG IDEA that Paul sought to establish?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know that all we have before the Father is solely on the merit of His Son's person and work.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Christ in His person and work above our own righteousness.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in Christ alone for our standing before the Father.

Outline:

Paul makes two primary points in the paragraph before us.

I. We are Justified *by Grace* **Alone** *through Faith* **Alone** *in Christ* **Alone** (vv. 15, 16).

A. The universal need for justification (v. 15).

When it comes to the need for justification before God all men are created equal (v. 15). There are many differences between being raised Jewish and the non-Jewish. But there is one sense in which they are equals. Regardless as to whether you are a Jew or a Gentile obedience to the Law or human morality cannot make anyone acceptable or righteous before God. The point of the verse is to show that all men stand equally condemned before God.

Jewish theology identifies the Law-less Gentiles as "sinners." When grace negates Law does it then make the Jew a sinner? What once gave them identity (the Law) will be done away with. They will form a new identity by faith in the Messiah. Their faith in Him becomes their new identity. This identity is open to both Jew and Gentile regardless of ethnicity.

B. The singular means of justification (v.16)

Justification is found only in Christ and obtained by grace through faith (v. 16). We cannot afford to be mistaken here. "Whatever is not grace is the law, whether it be judicial, ceremonial, or the Ten Commandments. The law, no doubt, is holy, righteous, and good, . . . yet notwithstanding a man is not justified thereby before God." (Luther, *Galatians*, 128).

Even the Jew understood that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Christ. Not all Jews saw the inability of the law to save. The Judaizers did not see the Law's complete insufficiency. They believed it was sufficient, but simply not enough. They saw the law as something that needed help, but still was needful.

1. No one can be justified by the works of the Law

The work produced by the law cannot produce justification. “The works of the Law are the actions prescribed by the law. They are not deprecated in themselves, for the law of God is ‘holy and just and good’ (Rom. 7:12). What is deprecated is the performing of them in a spirit of legalism, or with the idea that their performance will win acceptance before God.” (Bruce, *Galatians*, 137).

“The works of the Law, according to Paul, include the whole Law, judicial, ceremonial, moral. Now, if the performance of the moral law cannot justify, how can circumcision justify, when circumcision is part of the ceremonial law?”

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 60-68. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.

The works of the Law is that doctrine which teaches that salvation can be attained by an external conformity to the demands of the Law. However, at its core the Law did not preach an external conformity but an internal change (1 Sam. 15:22; Pss 34:18; 51:16-17; Mark 12:28-34).

1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, And to heed than the fat of rams.

Psalm 34:18 **The LORD is near to the brokenhearted** And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 51:16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart,** O God, You will not despise.

Mark 12:28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "**What commandment is the foremost of all?**" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; 33 AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, **is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.**"

The Law was never intended to be an end. It was only and most importantly a type and shadow. The Law, like God, was perfect and thus incapable of being perfectly kept. No one compared to it could be justified.

2. Justification before God comes by believing in Jesus Christ

It is not something I do, it has been done.

“For him the essential thing was, **not what a man could do for God, but what God had done for him.**” ([emphasis added] William Barclay, *Galatians*, 5).

My justification comes in believing that what He has done is enough. The faith of Jesus Christ is a faith that not only finds its source in Him, but its object as well. He is not only the author of our faith, but the aim of our faith. Thus, saving faith has Christ as its object. If Christ is not its object, then it is not saving faith.

We must stop here and define what is meant by this glorious truth of Justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. “[Justification] is a legal term, borrowed from the law courts and means, ‘to declare righteous.’ Its opposite is ‘to condemn.’” (BKC, 595). “It declares a verdict of acquittal, and so excluding all possibility of condemnation.” (EDT, 593). In justification we are being declared righteous when we are actually wicked. “Once you have been ‘justified by faith’ you can never be held guilty before God.” (Wiersbe, *Galatians*, 54).

There is a principle within the American judicial system that expresses well this truth. It is **the Double Jeopardy Clause of the Fifth Amendment**. It states, “nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb.” “As a general proposition, the Double Jeopardy Clause applies only to criminal cases and consists of three separate constitutional protections. **First**, it protects against a second criminal prosecution for the same offense after acquittal. **Second**, it protects against a subsequent prosecution for the same offense after conviction. **Finally**, it protects against multiple punishments for the same offense.” (*The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the US*, 232-233).

We did not build our understanding of Scriptural forgiveness from the United States Constitution, we built our understanding of American justice from Calvary. There is a qualifier that I found interesting and it reads as follows. “Double Jeopardy does not prevent a separate sovereignty from prosecuting again for the same offense.” When I read that I thought of Romans 8:31-34.

31 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 **Who will bring a charge against God's elect?** God is the one who justifies; 34 **who is the one who condemns?** Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

On what basis can we be declared righteous? On the basis of His death! The words “justification” in verse 15 are both passive. He justifies me, I cannot justify myself.

“The two will not mingle. He who would put one foot on faith and the other on such works plunges into the gulf. Make Christ the bridge, save for one last inch, use works of the law for that, and the bridge will crash the moment you step upon it.” (Lanski, *Galatians*, 107).

In justification I am now right with God. Why am I right with God? **I am right with God because of something Jesus Christ did, not because of anything I have done or will do.** Please hear me out. I am right with God because of Christ. Christ did the work. I can only rest in what He has done. When I labor to be accepted I am declaring the inadequacy of His work. When I believe there is something that I can do to make me “un-right,” then I am declaring the insufficiency of His work. All that I do as a Christian whether it is Bible study, Church attendance, the giving of my wealth, any act of obedience is simply a declaration that His work was enough and I am now laboring to learn to rest in His finished work.

Regardless as to your current feelings of failure you stand before the Father in the very righteousness of Christ. Nothing can alter this glorious truth. It is as I come to grips with this truth that I begin to loath my sinful actions that stand in stark contrast to His holiness.

Listen to Martin Luther’s strong words to those who would make salvation a product of their own efforts/works.

“With Paul we absolutely deny the possibility of self merit. God never yet gave to any person grace and everlasting life as a reward for merit. The opinions of the [autosoteric] are the intellectual pipe-dreams of idle pates, that serve no other purpose but to draw men away from the true worship of God. The [autosoteric] is founded upon hallucinations.”

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 60-68. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.

The call is not to change what you are, but to declare what He is on the canvas of your life. Let the Holy Spirit paint His life on to your life. Rejoice knowing that He is manifesting Himself through you.

II. We are Sanctified by Grace **Alone** through Faith **Alone** in Christ **Alone** (vv. 17- 21).

Paul is basically confronting the Judaizers in regard to their belief that the uncircumcised Gentiles could not be justified by Christ alone. He is saying that if he is justified by Christ alone and yet obligated to the Law for sanctification then he is a transgressor of the things he has sought to put away.

A. The question (v. 17).

By leaving the law for justification do I become a Gentile sinner? If so, then does a Christ justification promote sin by increasing sinners? No. This thought is an expression of verse 15.

“All who say that faith alone in Christ does not justify a person, convert Christ into a minister of sin, a teacher of the Law, and a cruel tyrant who requires the impossible. All merit-seekers take Christ for a new lawgiver.”

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 68-85. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.

It is the law that shows me to be a transgressor. It is the law that shows me my inability to perform. It is the law that compels me to cry out for help. Here is the good news and healing words of the Gospel, “Believe on Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

The verse is interesting because justification is something I can seek after (Present Active Participle), but it is not something I can do for myself.

B. The answer (vv. 17b-20)

1. Short answer – “God forbid”

Does grace promote sin? Absolutely not! Though the justified are right with God, as long as they occupy this vessel of flesh, they will still sin. But does this make Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

In the absence of the Law, the Jew would consider himself a “sinner” like the Law-less Gentiles. Grace negates Law, thus Jews become Law-less like the Gentiles and are thus sinners. Paul says in verses 17 and 18.

2. Long answer

- a. Justification by Grace **Alone** through Faith **Alone** in Christ **Alone** removes me from the Law’s authority in Sanctification (vv. 18-19).

Paul applies this to the Galatian problem and the Peter confrontation, “By going back to that which I was saved from I show myself to be a law breaker. Since I am dead to the Law it no longer has authority over me.” **This is Paul’s illustration in Romans 7.** “In Christ the believer is dead to the law. He is under no obligation to keep it as the means of justification or sanctification.” (Gromacki, *Galatians*, 73).

“Paul was quite sure of one thing – that Jesus Christ had done for him what he could never have done for himself.” (William Barclay, *Galatians*, 22).

“Paul’s thesis is that God justifies sinners on a just ground, namely, that the claims of God’s law upon them have been fully satisfied. The law has not been altered, or suspended, or flouted for their justification, but fulfilled – by Jesus Christ, acting in their name. By perfectly serving God, Christ perfectly kept the law (cf. Matt. 3:15).”

Paul is positively defending the fact that he is dead to the Law in order that he might live for God. The Law killed Paul by demonstrating all the places he had broken the Law. If I had never seen my despair under Law and my complete failure to measure up, I would never have sought Christ (3:24).

b. The justified will live the Christ life (vv.19b-20).

Verse 20 is an expanded and [clarifying] parallel to verse 19. How can I be dead to the law and yet alive to God? The answer is found in verse 20.

The power of Paul’s argument is here established. Paul openly declares his new identity by his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. It is no longer the Law that gives him his identity, but Christ Jesus. Everything about Paul’s past is done away with. He is *in Christ* a new creature.

N.T. Wright how verse 20, “Is the heart of Paul’s argument. One must lose everything, including the memory of who one was before; and one must accept, and learn to live by, a new identity, with a new foundation. Paul’s head-on clash with Peter in Antioch was about Christian identity. His passionate appeal to the Galatians is about their Christian identity.” (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 24, 25).

1a. I am dead (v.20).

What does it mean to be dead? I am no longer under obligation to these things. They have no claim on my life. I do not have to meet their standard nor obey their ‘rules.’

aa. I am dead to sin (Rom. 6:6-12).

Listen carefully to the weighty words of Martin Luther concerning our sin and the great doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. “Yea, sin is indeed always in us, and the godly do feel it, but it is covered, and is not imputed unto us of God for Christ’s sake; whom because we do apprehend by faith, all our sins are now no sins. We therefore do make this definition of a Christian, that a Christian is not he which hath no sin, or feeleth no sin, but he to whom God imputeth not his sin because of his faith in Christ. This doctrine bringeth strong consolation to afflicted consciences in serious and inward terrors.” (Luther, *Galatians*, 137-138).

bb. I am dead to self (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Mark 8:34).

cc. I am dead to society (Gal. 6:14).

2b. I am a live (v. 20).

What does it mean to be alive? Christ is my standard, I must obey Him. But His presence brings His power and provision enabling me and His passion motivates me to serve Him alone. “Those who belong to the Messiah are *in the Messiah*, so that what is true of him is true of them.” (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 25). Paul’s argument is telling. Whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, you are now one in Christ. Your ethnic identity is lost and replaced by a new identity. You are **Christians** above all else.

“The point of it all, here in Galatians, is quite simple. Paul was demonstrating to Peter that even Jewish Christians have lost their old identity, defined by the law, and have come into a new identity, defined only by the Messiah.” (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 27).

“When we look at ourselves we find plenty of sin. But when we look at Christ, we have no sin. Whenever we separate the person of Christ from our own person, we live under the Law and not in Christ; we are condemned by the Law, dead before God. If we lose sight of Christ and begin to consider our past, we simply go to pieces. Faith connects you so intimately with Christ, that He and you become as it were one person. As such you may boldly say: ‘I am now one with Christ. Therefore Christ's righteousness, victory, and life are mine.’ On the other hand, Christ may say: ‘I am that big sinner. His sins and his death are mine, because he is joined to me, and I to him.’

Whenever remission of sins is freely proclaimed, people misinterpret it according to Romans 3:8, ‘Let us do evil, that good may come.’ As soon as people hear that we are not justified by the Law, they reason maliciously: ‘Why, then let us reject the Law. If grace abounds, where sin abounds, let us abound in sin, that grace may all the more abound.’ People who reason thus are reckless. They make sport of the Scriptures and slander the sayings of the Holy Ghost. ”

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 68-85. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.

Notice five helpful thoughts concerning this union with Christ.

aa. I live by the Presence of Christ (“Christ lives in me”)

bb. I live by the Power of Christ (“Faith of the Son of God”)

cc. I live by the Passion of Christ (“Who loved me”)

“It was a source of unending wonder to him ‘that I, even I, have mercy found.’” (Bruce, *Galatians*, 146). “Did the Law ever love me? Did the Law ever sacrifice itself for me? Did the Law ever die for me? On the contrary, it accuses me, it frightens me, it drives me crazy.” (Luther on Galatians 2:17-21).

dd.I live by the Provision of Christ (“Gave Himself for me”)

Notice the personalizing of Paul’s statement. God loves me. Not me, corporately, but me individually. Before the foundation of the world God called me to Himself (Eph. 1:4). He formed me from my mother’s womb. Although I am one with humanity at large, He loves me and gave Himself for me.

The life lived is a life of “good works.” It is a life marked by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is a conformity to the commands of and under the New Agreement. Martin Luther has this to say concerning good works as it relates to his discussion on Galatians 2:14-16.

“The true way of becoming a Christian is to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the Law.

We know that we must also teach good works, but they must be taught in their proper turn, when the discussion is concerning works and not the article of justification.

After we have taught faith in Christ, we teach good works. "Since you have found Christ by faith," we say, "begin now to work and do well. Love God and your neighbor. Call upon God, give thanks unto Him, praise Him, confess Him. These are good works.

Let them flow from a cheerful heart, because you have remission of sin in Christ."

Here the question arises by what means are we justified? We answer with Paul, "By faith only in Christ are we pronounced righteous, and not by works." Not that we reject good works. Far from it. But we will not allow ourselves to be removed from the anchorage of our salvation.

The Law is a good thing. But when the discussion is about justification, then is no time to drag in the Law. When we discuss justification we ought to speak of Christ and the benefits He has brought us.

Christ is no sheriff. He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.)"

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 60-68. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.

C. The conclusion (v.21)

“To frustrate that, is to act in such a way as to lead to the inference, that this display was either unnecessary or insufficient for its avowed purpose. they who give their support in any way to the doctrine of justification by works, do thus frustrate the grace of God.” (John Brown, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians*, 98).

Law and Grace are not compatible. To blend the two is really just a work’s principle. If I seek a right standing before God in any way other than the cross of Christ, than I am declaring the insufficiency of His cross work and Christ died needlessly. Any form of doctrine that adds to the gospel is a frustrating of the grace of God by negating Christ’s death. I think we fail to recognize the enormity of our sin when we add anything to the gospel of Jesus Christ. All that we are before the Father is sourced solely in the person and work of the Son. Nothing we do can add to or take from this glorious truth. We distort the gospel when we see our works as contributing to the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Listen to the glorious conclusion wrought by Martin Luther on this idea. His language is plain and visual.

“Blessed is the person who knows how to use this truth in times of distress. He can talk. He can say: ‘Mr. Law, go ahead and accuse me as much as you like. I know I have committed many sins, and I continue to sin daily. But that does not bother me. You have got to shout louder, Mr. Law. I am deaf, you know. Talk as much as you like, I am dead to you. If you want to talk to me about my sins, go and talk to my flesh. Belabor that, but don't talk to my conscience. My conscience is a lady and a queen, and has nothing to do with the likes of you, because my conscience lives to Christ under another law, a new and better law, the law of grace.’

We have two propositions: To live unto the Law, is to die unto God. To die unto the Law, is to live unto God. These two propositions go against reason. No law-worker can ever understand them. But see to it that you understand them. The Law can never justify and save a sinner. The Law can only accuse, terrify, and kill him. Therefore to live unto the Law is to die unto God. Vice versa, to die unto the Law is to live unto God. If you want to live unto God, bury the Law, and find life through faith in Christ Jesus.

By faith in Christ a person may gain such sure and sound comfort, that he need not fear the devil, sin, death, or any evil. ‘Sir Devil,’ he may say, ‘I am not afraid of you. I have a Friend whose name is Jesus Christ, in whom I believe. He has abolished the Law, condemned sin, vanquished death, and destroyed hell for me. He is bigger than you, Satan. He has licked you, and holds you down. You cannot hurt me.’ This is the faith that overcomes the devil.

Paul manhandles the Law. He treats the Law as if it were a thief and a robber He treats the Law as contemptible to the conscience, in order that those who believe in Christ may take courage to defy the Law, and say: 'Mr. Law, I am a sinner. What are you going to do about it?'

Or take death. Christ is risen from death. Why should we now fear the grave? Against my death I set another death, or rather life, my life in Christ.

Oh, the sweet names of Jesus! He is called my law against the Law, my sin against sin, my death against death. Translated, it means that He is my righteousness, my life, my everlasting salvation. For this reason was He made the law of the Law, the sin of sin, the death of death, that He might redeem me from the curse of the Law. He permitted the Law to accuse Him, sin to condemn Him, and death to take Him, to abolish the Law, to condemn sin, and to destroy death for me. "

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 68-85. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.

"Rock of Ages"

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, else I die.

Augustus Montague Toplady

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

"There are two great temptations in the Christian life, and, in a certain sense, the better a man is the more liable he is to them. **First**, there is the temptation to try to earn God's favor, and **second**, the temptation to use some little achievement to compare oneself with our fellow men to our advantage and their disadvantage. But the Christianity which has enough of self left in it to think that by its own efforts it can please God and that by its own achievements it can show itself superior to other men is not true Christianity at all." (Barclay, *Galatians*, 21).

1. Are you resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ for your standing before the Father?
2. What confidence have you placed in self for the perfecting of your position before the Father? How can this be identified and then abandoned?
3. What does this passage cause you to change in your thinking and/or actions?

Although this is a lengthy quote, let us consider the comments made by Martin Luther from Galatians 2:14-16 as it relates to how one comes to Jesus Christ.

The true way of salvation is this. First, a person must realize that he is a sinner, the kind of a sinner who is congenitally unable to do any good thing. "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." Those who seek to earn the grace of God by their own efforts are trying to please God with sins. They mock God, and provoke His anger. The first step on the way to salvation is to repent.

The second part is this. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through His merit. He was crucified and killed for us. By sacrificing His Son for us God revealed Himself to us as a merciful Father who donates remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ's sake. God hands out His gifts freely unto all men. That is the praise and glory of His mercy.

Faith apprehends Jesus Christ. We teach this: First a person must learn to know himself from the Law. With the prophet he will then confess: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And, "against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Having been humbled by the Law, and having been brought to a right estimate of himself, a man will repent. He finds out that he is so depraved, that no strength, no works, no merits of his own will ever deliver him from his guilt. He will then understand the meaning of Paul's words: "I am sold under sin"; and "they are all under sin."

At this state a person begins to lament: "Who is going to help me?" In due time comes the Word of the Gospel, and says: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Believe in Jesus Christ who was crucified for your sins. Remember, your sins have been imposed upon Christ."

In this way are we delivered from sin. In this way are we justified and made heirs of everlasting life.

In order to have faith you must paint a true portrait of Christ. Christ is no law giver. He is the Life giver. He is the Forgiver of sins. You must believe that Christ might have atoned for the sins of the world with one single drop of His blood.

Instead, He shed His blood abundantly in order that He might give abundant satisfaction for our sins.

Here let me say, that these three things, faith, Christ, and imputation of righteousness, are to be joined together. Faith takes hold of Christ. God accounts this faith for righteousness.

This imputation of righteousness we need very much, because we are far from perfect. As long as we have this body, sin will dwell in our flesh. Then, too, we sometimes drive away the Holy Spirit; we fall into sin, like Peter, David, and other holy men. Nevertheless we may always take recourse to this fact, "that our sins are covered," and that "God will not lay them to our charge." Sin is not held against us for Christ's sake. Where Christ and faith are lacking, there is no remission or covering of sins, but only condemnation.

To give a short definition of a Christian: A Christian is not somebody chucks sin, because of his faith in Christ. This doctrine brings comfort to consciences in serious trouble. When a person is a Christian he is above law and sin. When the Law accuses him, and sin wants to drive the wits out of him, a Christian looks to Christ. A Christian is free. He has no master except Christ. A Christian is greater than the whole world.

PROJECT WITTENBERG, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535) by Martin Luther, Translated by Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), Chapter 2, pp. 60-68. Commenting on Galatians 2:16.