

Justified by Faith, Not the Law: Galatians 2 and the True Gospel

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*“Knowing that a man is not **justified by the works of the law** but by **faith in Jesus Christ**... for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” — Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)*

Highlight key: = grace / *apart-from-works* truth · = the precious gift · **bold** = key terms

Why Paul Wrote to Galatia

Paul wrote because the church allowed a preacher of **another gospel** — and confusion followed. The true gospel delivers from sickness, pain, sorrow, and trouble; the false message brought curse, unfruitfulness, and separation from Christ.

- The whole book of **Galatians 2** proves what the true gospel is
 - Preaching a gospel *other than* the true one brings a **double curse**
 - Preaching the true gospel brings **double blessing** — health and happiness increase
 - We must know the true gospel before we share it with friends
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Quick Recap: Galatians Chapter 1

- **Know the gospel of God** — it is written so we can know it clearly
- Anyone who preaches another gospel faces a double curse
- Anyone who speaks the true gospel receives double blessing
- Today we continue from **Galatians 2** — verses 1-14 set the scene; the key teaching begins at verse 15

Five Truths in Galatians 2:15-21

1. **Justified by faith** — not by works of the law
 2. **Justified vs righteous** — action (verb) vs identity (noun)
 3. **Danger of preaching the non-gospel** again
 4. **Live for God** — by being dead to the law
 5. **Let Christ live through you** — by faith, resting in Him
 6. **Do not make Christ's death vain**
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1☐ **Justified by Faith — Not Works of the Law**

Galatians 2:15-16 (NKJV)

*"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."* —

Galatians 2:15-16 (NKJV)

- Three times Paul repeats: **not by works** — only by **faith in Christ**
- **Exam analogy:** God's pass mark is 100. One mark short equals failure — we cannot be justified by our obedience
- Jesus took all sin at the cross — only because of *His* obedience can we become righteous

Romans 5:19 (NKJV)

*"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made **righteous**."* — **Romans 5:19 (NKJV)**

2☐ Justified vs Righteous — Two Words, One Truth

Greek word	Part of speech	Meaning
Justified	Verb (action)	The Judge declares: all sins paid — you are declared righteous
Righteous	Noun (identity)	Who you <i>are</i> in Christ — a place, a standing, already yours

- **Justification** is the courtroom act; **righteousness** is the identity you receive
 - People call you a righteous person — that is how you live, because you *are* righteous in Christ
 - Two ways to become righteous appear in Galatians: by *our* obedience (impossible) or by **Christ's obedience** (the gospel way)
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3☐ Do Not Rebuild the Law

Galatians 2:17-18 (NKJV)

“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! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” — Galatians 2:17-18 (NKJV)

- Linking obedience to blessings rebuilds the law — and brings curse
 - The false preacher linked righteousness and blessings to *your* deeds
 - The true gospel: you are blessed because of what **Jesus did at the cross**
 - Say “you will be blessed because of the cross” — that is double blessing; preach law-works and you inherit curse
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4☐ Dead to the Law — Live for God

Galatians 2:19-20 (NKJV)

“For I through the law died 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.” — Galatians 2:19-20 (NKJV)

Law says	Cross says
I deal with you based on your deeds	I deal with you based on what Jesus did
Blessings tied to your obedience	Blessings tied to Christ’s obedience
To lose blessing, you must fail	To lose blessing, Jesus would have to disobey — impossible

- **Dead to law** means your behaviour and good deeds are not linked to your blessings
- **Living for God** means saying: my blessing is not related to what I do — it is related to what He did at the cross
- Only when we believe we are dead to law do we truly live for God

5▣ Let Christ Live Through You — Vine and Branches

John 15:5 (NKJV)

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” — John 15:5 (NKJV)

- The branch does not struggle to produce fruit — **sap flows from the vine** and fruit appears automatically
- **Remain in Me** means stay connected and rest — do nothing in your own strength
- Resting on Christ is how you remain; believing His obedience makes you righteous is how you stay attached

Hebrews 4:9-10 (NKJV)

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.” — Hebrews 4:9-10 (NKJV)

- To rest in Christ is to remain in Him — putting every burden on Him
 - **Crucified with Christ** (perfect passive): once done, effect for all time
 - **Christ lives in me** (present active): daily connection by **faith**
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6□ Living by Faith — Ephesians 2:8-9

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” — Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

- **Faith** = believing He did everything at the cross; you rest on Him — nothing to boast in
 - Every day: “By His obedience I am righteous... I will be blessed... I will be healed... I will prosper”
 - Link *every* area of life to Jesus — sickness, pain, sorrow, path, health — that is faith
 - Without Jesus there is no faith; when you link anything with Jesus, that is faith
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7□ Do Not Make Christ’s Death Vain

Galatians 2:21 (NKJV)

*“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then **Christ died in vain**.” — Galatians 2:21 (NKJV)*

- Saying blessings come from tithing, church attendance, ministry, or good deeds ties blessing to *your* works

- That declares Christ's sacrifice useless — you make His death **for nothing**
 - Value the cross: every blessing you receive is because of Christ, not because of what you do tomorrow
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The Takeaway

1. **Justified by faith** — Galatians 2:16 repeats three times: not by works, only by faith in Christ
 2. **Righteous by Christ's obedience** — Romans 5:19; not by our exam-passing efforts
 3. **Dead to law, alive to God** — blessings flow from the cross, not your deeds
 4. **Remain in Christ** — John 15:5; rest in Him (Hebrews 4) and let sap — His life — produce fruit
 5. **Live by faith daily** — Ephesians 2:8-9; link every blessing to what Jesus did
 6. **Never nullify grace** — Galatians 2:21; do not make Christ's death vain by preaching law-blessing
 7. **True gospel** — preach Christ's cross-work and receive double blessing; another gospel brings curse
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Scripture-based study on Galatians 2 and the true gospel. If it strengthened you, share it with someone who needs this truth today.
