

Live in Gospel Freedom! This News is Vital!

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Date: 22 October 2023

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to the book of Galatians.

Galatians chapter 2. Galatians 2, we're gonna do verses 11 through 21 this morning. Galatians 2, page 148 in that black Bible in the chair in front of you.

1:48 in that black Bible in the chair in front of you. Galatians 2, 11 through 21. Pardon me for my nose.

I just think that smoke is really just bothering me. Is it bothering you too? Man, that was just really horrendous. Yesterday was bad. This morning was bad too.

Galatians chapter 2. We're gonna finish the chapter. Verse 11 through 21.

[1:07] Let me read. There's no filter with Paul.

You know what I mean? For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and held himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy. With the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. When I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas, In the presence of all, if you being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how do you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles. Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, when we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law, since by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

But if while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May never be. For if I rebuild what I have destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor, for through the law I died to the law, that I might live to God.

[2:39] I've been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. In the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself up for me.

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died needlessly. The year was 1215.

A group of barons from England came together to defy King John because of higher taxes, unsuccessful wars, and conflict with the Pope.

And they forced King John to agree and sign a document which is later known as the Magna Carta. This charter required King John of England to proclaim certain liberties and accept that his will was not arbitrary.

For example, by explicitly accepting that no free men, in the sense of non-surfs, could be punished except through the law of the land. A right which is still in existence today.

[4:01] It is, as one person said, quote, the greatest constitutional document of all times, the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot.

And when you look at Galatians, the book of Galatians, Galatians is the Magna Carta of the Christian faith. Because it continues to remind us, as God's word, about this important truth around which the church will stand or fall.

It's what, what is it, R.C. Sproul said that, even Luther said that. So that's why, as we come to this part in Galatians, live in gospel freedom, we'll see that this news is vital.

This news is significant. This news is so important. This news about gospel freedom is vital.

Just talking with someone, an ex-Roman Catholic on Friday, talked to him about how there's no grace in the Roman Catholic Church. There's no grace.

[5:25] It's God's, he's ready to get you, right? He's gonna get you. There's no grace. There's no talk about the sufficiency of the death of Christ and how you can come into the throne of grace with freedom.

Nothing. This great truth, this news is vital. The news that we're justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. So live in gospel freedom.

this news is vital. It's of utmost importance. We must get this right. Upon this truth, we stand. Upon this truth, the church will stand or fall. That's the reason why Paul took the time to explain it. Took the time to reiterate this and to show why this news is so vital.

And that's really the first point. This news of justification is vital. I actually should say to verse 18, 2:15 to 18.

[6:38] This news of justification is vital. This is one of the three main tenets of Christianity that must be upheld. Justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Who Jesus is, the God-man, fully God, fully man, and the Bible, it is totally sufficient. Those 66 books don't need anything else.

So this is one of the main tenets of Christianity. One of the three pillars. If that pillar goes, all the other two go. And Christianity falls.

So this news of justification is vital. We must maintain the vital significance and importance of the gospel else the church will fail and fall.

Look at how he says, and we're starting later on in what Paul is writing here to the Galatian churches in verse 15. He says, we are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.

[7:47] What does he mean by that? Jews aren't sinners, just Gentiles? No, no, no, no. That's not what he means. He means this. They are Jews by birth possessing great remarkable privileges.

If you see someone who is Israeli realize by birth they possess great remarkable privileges.

They were not, according to the current Jewish concept there in the first century, Gentile sinners. Gentile sinners who had no privileges at all.

Gentiles are separated. Paul says this in Ephesians chapter 2. Remember that form of you, the Gentiles in the flesh. Chapter 2 verse 11. And he says, verse 12, you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Gentiles, they were separated from God, without God. Jews possess great privileges, remarkable privileges.

[9:06] That's what he means here in chapter 2 verse 15 of Galatians. And yet notice he says verse 16. Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus.

They knew, or at least they should have known, they knew that no privilege earns merit before God. They acknowledged that the Jewish law was unable to bring them to right standing with God. They should have known that. So both Gentiles and Jews are sinners needing God's grace extended to them.

And he says here, not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus. Justified occurs for the first time right here.

Three times in this part. And justified is a legal forensic term that was borrowed from the courts. no one can be justified by the works of the law but only through faith in Christ Jesus.

[10:17] That's the only way. Justification is a gracious act, gracious act of God by which sinners are declared judicially righteous in God's sight on the basis of the person and work of Jesus.

That's what it means to be justified. That's what it means to be made right with God. You're credited with God's righteousness in Christ. You're reckoned as righteous.

A gracious act of God whereby he declares the sinner just based solely on Christ's personhood and accomplish mediatorial substitution work of Jesus.

A person embraces Jesus is trusting Jesus. So justification is a forensic act. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Paul says in Romans chapter 8 verse 1. So our guilt is imputed to Jesus and God's righteousness is imputed to the sinner in Christ says Paul 2 Corinthians 5:21 He made him and knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Jesus in Christ in him.

[11:42] And he says here but through faith in Christ Jesus even we who have believed in Christ Jesus we believed into Christ Jesus thus justified by faith through faith and not by the works of the

law.

The law brings wrath but justification answers that wrath by imputing to the sinner God's righteousness. What are the works of the law?

He says here not by the works of the law what are those? Moralistic works performed in hope that God would accept me but God accepts sinners on the basis does not accept sinners on the basis of their own merits if he did there wouldn't be grace but those works these works of the law include food laws circumcision Sabbath keeping rigorous asceticism physical torture sacrifice to appease a deity you're praying to angels praying to saints going to mass excuse me humanitarianism political zeal being a good person you're a church goer blah blah blah blah blah do we try to add these things and other things as merits before God what do you add what do I add to try and gain God's approval towards salvation what do you add and the reformers they saw this this works righteousness system and rediscovered the truth of the gospel same for us today we can allow whatever to distract us from this from the truth of this vital news works of the law do not equal faith in Christ

Jesus faith trusting in Christ not works is the alone instrument by which justification is received justification is mediated through the means of faith it's like the channel how does the water flow it's through that channel how does justification comes it's through that channel it cannot be earned by merit it's accepted as a gift by faith which by the way faith is a gift too and Jesus is the content or object of that faith faith is not the basis or the ground of justification but the means by which we're justified look at what he says the next part of verse 16 or excuse me the last part of verse 16 since by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified no one can be declared righteous by the works of the law we have an alien righteousness we need an alien righteousness whether you're a Gentile or a Jew it doesn't matter and then look at what he says here verse 17 but if while seeking to be justified in Christ we ourselves have also been found sinners is Christ an administrator of sin may never be so what's he saying here it seems that Paul said if works of the law are unnecessary for justification does this mean that

Christ encourages you to sin go ahead keep sinning that's great in other words does this bring antinomianism there's no law do whatever you want his opponent said that's what he was doing his opponent said he encouraged sinful living Paul said are we preaching this may never be no way dude no way we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone but the faith that saves is not alone good works do not justify us but no truly justified person wants to be without those works and then this is what he says this is four here let me give you the reason verse 18 four if I rebuild what I have destroyed

[16:28] I prove myself to be a transgressor what does he mean by this the basis he doesn't preach that you can go do whatever you want Christ encourages you to sin is this if one retraces their steps back to works and away from faith replacing the gospel with law or one substitutes righteousness by faith for righteousness that's obtained by obedience what does that one find when you return to the law well that person will find that they cannot keep the law to be justified therefore sins multiplies in other words it's the opposite he says if you don't embrace this vital news of the truth of the gospel that will make you an antinomian that will make you to go sin that will encourage you to sin that will multiply sin not the other way around and the law condemns so this speaks about the temptation to refer back to our old ways of works righteousness which is to have that tendency we have that tendency we're going to see that in a moment to forsake the mighty work of

Christ and embrace our own worthless merits to try to appease a holy God Paul is warning the Galatians don't go back live in this gospel freedom so this news is vital he's going to give two reasons now why is it so vital why is it so important first because death with Jesus ends self enthronement death with Jesus ends self enthronement look at what he says here in verse 19 this is verse 19 through 20 did I put that there 19 through 21 for through the law I died to the law that I might live to God for in more cause to what he says in verse 17 and 18 I died through the law I died to the law the law cannot justify you the law cannot give you life it loses its power through the death of Jesus who bore the law's curse verse 13 of chapter 3

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law have it become a curse for us the law loses its power through Jesus death who bore the curse of the law Christ's death thoroughly satisfied the just demands of the law placed on you as a sinner so the just penalty for sin Jesus bore for us the law leads us to faith in Christ because of its ministry of restriction and its ministry of condemnation so since Christ died and then we die in him this releases us from the curse releases us from the power

of the law releases us from the power of sin

Jesus died as my representative so then the father's condemnation of his son on the cross in our stead condemned the condemnation of the law Jesus died as my representative and since he died as my rep I too have died you have died that's why he says for through the law I died through the law in order that I might live to God it happens because of union with Christ crucified the father's condemnation of his son on the cross in our stead condemned the condemnation of the law so now instead of living for myself I now live as God wants me to live the law killed Christ and those joined to Christ by faith well so he says let me put it another way verse 20

I've been crucified with Christ and there's no longer I who live but Christ lives in me what Jesus completed when he died for sinners on the cross continues to have vital significance for Paul and really for all of us through the work of Jesus we die to the law I've been crucified with Christ through the old way of life based on human merit and good works as well as to the laws condemning power and his death brings new life and my death this death brings new life because he says it's no longer I who live self-righteous self-centered Paul died self-righteous self-centered Jim died put your name in there self-righteous self-centered died so death with

[22:17] Jesus ends self-enthronement we yielded the throne of our lives to Jesus so I don't want to live for myself that's what he says the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God the old you the old me under the condemnation of God's wrath is gone Jesus lives in me my life is completely redirected transformed by this vital news and this self-enthronement it's died and now there's a new me the life I now live there's not a loss of personal identity it's not some mystical new age mythology of Christ no we live but it's a new life in Jesus a new life lived by faith in the son of

God faith releases God's power to live this Christian life this no longer live for myself life it's a no longer live for myself life that's why this news is so vital because Jesus death ends self-enthronement and then look at what he says about Jesus who loved me and delivered himself up for me the shame the condemnation the scourging the crown of thorns the mockery crucifixion the cup of wrath from the father his death his burial that's why we sing what love my God what love my

God who brought you down to earth all of this he loved me and he gave himself up for me he delivered himself up for me so faith in Jesus is founded upon his atonement his self sacrifice for his people his love for me and his deliverance for me I'm free to live under the authority of Jesus under the direction of Jesus Jesus is a sole object of our faith and our Christian living is based on his work and now Jesus dwells those who by faith trust in him alone for salvation this is significant news this is vital news and then look at what he says in verse 21 I do not nullify the grace of God in other words

Paul says I don't invalidate or I don't set aside or I don't reject God's grace it's my opponents they're the ones who are rejecting grace for if righteousness is through the law then Christ died needlessly if righteousness is achieved if you can have a right standing with God by keeping the works of the law then Jesus died for nada for nothing if there's anything that we can do to contribute to our justification except our sin before a holy God then why in the world would Jesus die as the song says hold on tell me what the cross was for that's a big mistake no in

Christ we trust him completely based upon his blood upon the cross God's righteousness is imputed credited to us through the means of faith alone so we base all our hope on him for eternity Jesus save me you're my only hope it's the only way so this news is vital why because his death it ends any type of self enthronement here's the second reason why else is it so vital because of our tendency tendency to what our tendency to be judgmental of ourselves of each other and then add to the gospel that's our tendency how can we act judgmentally on our brothers and sisters in Christ and exclude them from the table of fellowship when God has accepted them but that's our tendency we start judging ourselves based upon our own standard we start judging others based upon our own standard and then we end up adding to the gospel this takes us to the beginning of our passage chapter 2 verse 11 look at what he says remember

[28:11] Cephas was a pillar he just said he was a pillar but when Cephas Peter came to Antioch I opposed him to his face and you remember there's no no filter with Paul because he stood condemned for prior to the coming of certain men from James he used to eat with the Gentiles stop there so why Peter came to Antioch or when he came we don't know but certain men from James came now were these guys James' emissaries or did they simply use James' name to emphasize

their point it's doubtful that James actually endorsed these guys maybe they said we came in the name of James and James like nah I don't think it's wrong we don't know the details but one thing we do know Peter started to withdraw fellowship which was a reversal of his former practicing contrary to his convictions regarding the

Gentiles and Paul says I opposed him to the face Paul didn't back down when it came to the gospel and since Peter did this thing publicly Paul was going to deal with it publicly face to face when it came to the gospel Paul was like a lion strike because prior to this he says he used to eat with the Gentiles but when they came verse 12 he withdrew and held himself aloof fearing the party of the circumcision Peter went of glorious glorious sweet table fellowship with Gentiles Gentiles Gentile brothers and sisters maybe these meals referred to the fellowship meal of the early Christians the love feast the Lord's supper was culminating these meals we don't know a consequence of Jesus work is table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles for Jews

Christians fellowship with Gentile believers was a result of the gospel of grace such a beautiful picture of unity between Jews and Gentiles and Christ when they came he withdrew and held himself aloof fearing the party of the circumcision they adhered to the law these guys strictly with his dietary and cleansing laws a Christian Jew sitting down to eat with the Gentile could possibly be in danger from other Jews of violating food laws there were rules for clean and unclean things to eat with man-made restrictions and stipulations handed down through the ages pharisaic regulations more halakoth tradition of the elders but Jesus fulfilled the laws of the Old Testament these laws were given because God would dwell with his people and they needed to be holy it showed his holiness

Jesus fulfilled all these laws and regulations so we can have a dwelling with God our dwelling with God that's God's gracious love so these men who came from Judea they didn't have to deal with a strong Gentile presence each day they would be secluded but then they came to Anna whoa whoa what's with all these Gentiles what's going on here and so he withdrew he felt the pressure either directly or indirectly by these others he went from open fellowship with Gentiles to distancing himself from them and finally separating himself from them and these verbs they denote a gradual process gradual process that took place they had table fellowship in the beginning slowly began to die down this withdrawal suggested that the Gentiles could not be fully God's people they were forced to be Jews maybe they were withholding the Lord's supper from them we don't know but Peter was fearing the party of the circumcision what's his motive fear he was scared fear of criticism declining prestige by Peter doing this he taught there were two bodies of Christ Jews and Gentiles or well he should have known better he should have known better Acts chapter 10 remember the sheet vision remember that look at verse 13 and the rest of the Jews join him in hypocrisy with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy other Jewish Christians even Barnabas was carried away by Peter's hypocrisy they did it against their own consciences it was hypocritical while confessing even teaching they were one in

[33:27] Christ with Gentiles they were denying the truth by their very actions look at verse 14 but when I saw they were not straightforward with the gospel about the truth of the gospel I said to Cephas and the prince of all Paul got mad he was electric he was on fire did not not straightforward means they did not walk straight or proceed directly in regards to the truth of the gospel it wasn't overtly but they did deny the gospel the vital truth of the gospel that you're justified by grace alone through faith alone and so since he did it publicly Paul publicly confronted him he could not let this go because the truth of the gospel was at stake a public scandal calls for a public rebuke and it wasn't for his own benefit it wasn't because

Paul's feelings were hurt the gospel was at stake he confronted it because of the gospel of Jesus this was his main concern in the presence of all if you being a Jew live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews how do you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews Peter acted contrary to his proclaimed convictions he betrayed Christian freedom and slandered the brethren which is our tendency we judge ourselves and then others outside the gospel prior to this whole hypocrisy thing Peter lived like the Gentile apart from Jewish regulations if he was doing this before but not now how could he now require Gentile Christians to keep the very law from which he knew he was free from that he knew that this was inconceivable if a

Christian Jew learned that these legal requirements did not bring him into the kingdom or sustain you in the kingdom but then imposes upon Gentiles it's inexcusable are you crazy the two reasons why this news is so vital one the death of Jesus dethrones this self enthronement it kills it this self

enthronement but second we are prone to doing what Peter did it's so easy to add to the gospel our merits or good works do not sustain our faith your good works do not sustain your faith do not add to your faith do not give an extra little sugar to your faith it is always by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone it's vital one writer says this listen quote there is a Pharisee in the hearts of all sinners tempting them to look within to themselves to their own righteousness rather than to the provision of Christ end quote it's our tendency in ourselves we judge ourselves this whole concept that's given in psychology you must learn to forgive yourself that is a ridiculous concept people you understand that right you don't forgive yourself you trust in the forgiveness that you get from God because he forgives you you don't judge yourself based upon your own standards you judge based upon what God says in his word it's not about forgiving yourself and then others you need to abide by my standards or else I'm going to totally write you off we have that tendency too don't we and then we add to the gospel it's so vital for us to maintain the purity of this gospel freedom why because death with Jesus ends at self enthronement and that's our tendency we are justified by grace alone through faith alone and Christ alone so live in this gospel freedom it's all by God's grace if you're here you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ you've heard this message and you're hearing this about grace you can come you can find freedom God will save you based upon Jesus not your good works you're not a good person there are no good people there are just bad people do some good things sometimes God God God God should judge us and yet Jesus died and rose repent turn away from sin put your trust in Jesus he'll save you that's the heart of the gospel so let's thank him for this he's been so gracious to us pray with me please and father we are so thankful that you've been gracious to us that's what it's called it's called grace unmerited favor undeserved favor help us to live in the freedom of this grace and now we it's not us who live it's

[39:10] Christ lives in me your death has ended self enthronement this news is so vital because our tendency to judge ourselves by another standard to judge others to add to the gospel to become legalists to become antinomians help us to remain true to this truth we can be made right with you it's by your grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone it's all by your grace take a few moments if you would and relish in this truth of the gospel that it would encourage you you would see your sin and you would see it for what it is and yet be so thankful that God shows you grace he shows you grace that's why it's called grace grace is found only in Jesus and his death may it drive you to live in this gospel freedom that Christ will dwell in you who loved you and gave himself up for you reiterate repeat these words to yourself a few moments be silenced and then I'll play pick a little bit of my guitar just take that time to pray and think ponder meditate upon the truth of the gospel do that now please