

# Being Justified

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, we confess that it's often easy for us to see how the Word, Your Word, applies to other people, but we, and I include myself, we flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin.

So, Father, we ask for a mighty work of Your Holy Spirit in our lives as we open Your Word, that Your Word, Father, would convict our own hearts, that Your Word would come to the very command center of our lives, and that You, through Your Word, would do a work of grace deep within us.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, Your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, first a bit of a frivolous matter. My mic keeps going in and out. Is that just because I'm on a position of a stage, or is it just a monitor issue?

It's just a monitor issue? Okay. If all of a sudden you just can't hear me wave, actually, I'm going to be asking you to wave for a couple of things. So, here's the thing. My family knows that I have a problem. And one of my problems is, well, my family knows I have lots of problems.

But one of my many problems is I have problems with names. So, on Thanksgiving, when we have some of our kids over, I'm likely to say, Tommy, no, Jesse, no, Joseph, no, Rocky, no, Gordy, and finally get the right name.

[ 1 : 2 7 ]     And I even threw a dog's name in there. Okay. So, I have a problem with that. And I have... So, in this story that we're going to be looking at, the two main characters are Peter and Paul.

I am doomed. I will not make it through this sermon without messing up the names once, at least. So, what I want you to do is, if I'm saying Peter when I should be saying Paul, could somebody who's not fallen asleep wave at me?

And I'll know that either there's a wasp in the room, or I've just got the names mixed up. So, if you could help me, that would be good. Now, in a more serious matter, in the Willow Creek Church, I've been told, they've developed this habit that when they talk about something which is a bit controversial, that might get people mad, they sort of do a little symbol like this over their head.

And they say, you need to just extend... We need to extend mercy to everybody, because we're about to talk about something which could get people riled. And so, just let's give each other a little bit of mercy to try to talk this through a little bit.

And then the conversation will go a lot better. So, I'm claiming that this morning, because I'm going to ask a question.

[ 2 : 4 3 ]     And the question is... Now you're going to see why I need to have a little bit of mercy, and for people not to get upset too quickly. Is racism and prejudice...

Are racism and prejudice more important than purity of the gospel? Or is the purity of the gospel more important than racism and prejudice?

Now that's a... And you know what? I know that's a hot political issue right now. Those of you who watch football, it's going to be a hot issue.

It's been talked about a lot. And I know that for a lot of people, it's not just a political issue. It's a very deeply personal issue. Because I know there are probably people here who have been profoundly victimized by racism.

And I know I'm an all-white guy. So, that's why I'm asking for a little bit of mercy. And the reason I'm asking the question is not because I'm interested in commenting on Colin Kaepernick, where Black Lives Matter.

[ 3 : 49 ] It's not... I'm not doing anything political. It's because the Bible is asking us this question. We might not have noticed it when Kent was reading the Galatians text.

But we're going to be looking at Galatians 2 if you want to turn your Bibles. But in fact, the Bible is asking that question to us. Is discussing... Is dealing with racism and prejudice a far more pressing issue than dealing with clarity and the purity of the gospel?

Or is the clarity and purity of the gospel a more important issue to deal with than racism and prejudice? It's not me doing this to be political. The Bible is asking us this question.

We maybe didn't recognize it, but it's asking us this question. So, it'd be a great help for me. First of all, extend me some mercy. But it'd be a great help if you took your Bibles and turned to Galatians 2.

Galatians 2. Galatians 2. And we're going to start reading at the 11th verse. And actually, you know what we're going to do? We're going to start reading at verse 9. Because if we start at verse 9, the shock of verse 11 is far clearer to us.

[ 4 : 56 ] Okay? So, those of you who... So, if you don't know what's happened, is Paul is dealing with a problem in this church. And as part of him dealing with a problem, he's recounted some things that have gone on in the past.

And one of the things he shared with them is that a little bit earlier, Paul had initiated on his own behalf, not because he was in trouble, but he had traveled to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, James, and John.

And Cephas, which you're going to see in this text, that's just another name for Peter. All the way through the text, I'm going to use the word Peter rather than Cephas. Because for most of us, that's sort of a clearer way to understand it.

And just one other thing. The word Gentiles doesn't mean much to most of us anymore. And so, I'm going to substitute the word pagan for Gentiles. It's another perfectly good word for it. And it's, you know, or non-Jews, but I'm going to use the word pagan.

So, just the context. So, Peter... I mean, here, I've already done it. Paul has gone to Jerusalem to see Peter and James and John. And in verse 9, it tells you what happened after they talked.

[ 6 : 03 ] In verse 9, it says, And when James and Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, that's pillars of the church, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me.

It's a really good thing. The right hand of fellowship. Some of you from... When I was in a Baptist church growing up, that's how you joined the church. They extended the right hand of fellowship to you in the front of the church. And the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles or the pagans, and they to the circumcised.

Only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the pagans. But when they came, that's the people claiming to be from James, Peter drew back and separated himself.

That's from the church in Antioch, fearing that group, the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews who were part of the congregation acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

[ 7 : 22 ] But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, If you, though a Jew, live like a pagan and not like a Jew, how can you force the pagans to live like Jews?

Paul, why don't you tell us what you really think? It's very blunt. Now, here, just to sort of get the full, like part of this is a little bit hard for us to understand, because in Canada, at this point in time in our history, you know, you go to, if I go to Starbucks or some other coffee place, there's liable to be a big table, and you can just get a place on the table to do some work, have your coffee, your scone, and, you know, all and sundry are at the table.

And if I get up to go to another table, nobody thinks it's because I'm mad at them or prejudiced or racist. It's just because maybe a better table or better spots open up. So it's a little bit hard for us to get our minds around this.

And just to get, to put it in an imaginative way, so we understand, we need the image before us about what's actually just gone on. So Paul has been in this church in Antioch for a while.

It's a very, very, very multicultural church. And many of the people in the congregation are pagans who've become Christians, and they're also completed Jews. That is, Jewish people who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah, and now Christians, they're completed Jews.

[ 8 : 51 ] And it's a mixed congregation. And maybe Paul has been away for a couple of weeks on a trip or something like that, a preaching trip or just a break. And he comes back, and they've maybe had a prayer time together, the whole congregation.

And then after the prayer time, they're going to have something to eat. And so Paul goes to the buffet table, and he gets some hummus, and he gets some tabbouleh, and he gets some falafel.

And maybe because it's a big celebration, he gets some roasted goat, puts it in his bowl, goes to sit down on the grass, just as they usually do in groups of eight or ten, so they can all sort of joke and talk and have some fun.

And he's just sitting there talking. He notices that as he sits down, they're all a little bit nervous. But he just, or looking at him funny. But he's just eating away, having a great time.

And then, and this is the imaginative part, all of a sudden he starts to think to himself, he looks around. And he's the only white guy with the African Americans at this group.

[ 9 : 52 ] That's not that odd. But he looks around, and all the white guys and gals are by themselves in their own groups. And all the African Americans are in their own group.

And there's no mixing. And so he's eating his hummus, and he's starting to look at this, and he's thinking to himself, what went on while I was gone?

And then he sees Peter just with the white guys. And he sees Barnabas just with the white guys.

So Paul steps up, stands up. Need some quiet, everybody? Conversation stops. And he looks at Peter, and he says, if you, though a Jew, live like a pagan, and not like a Jew, how can you force pagans to live like Jews in front of them all?

Big shock. Dead silence. Red faces. Now here's the, here's the, this really, really, really important question for us.

[ 11 : 12 ] I mean, maybe, maybe we've been blessed, and we have some tourists visiting as guests this morning from the States or from some other country.

But we all live in Canada. So what would we want a Canadian Christian to do if they had the courage of Paul, and they found that the congregation was sitting in segregated seats?

And what would we, as Canadian Christians, want to do? What would we want another Canadian Christian to do? And you know what we would want? We would want, let's say it was me who had the courage.

You would want me to be able to tell you that I got up and said, what you're doing is racist. What you're doing is prejudiced. Don't you know that that's wrong? Don't you know that that has caused lots of pain and suffering and will continue to cause pain and suffering?

And you would want me to have a diatribe about racism and prejudice, and that's what you would want me to do because we are all Canadians and that is not what Paul does.

[ 12 : 19 ] That is not what Paul does. I mean, this is a bit of a check because Paul is going to say that the gospel is more important than dealing with racism.

Remember, hopefully you're still giving me some mercy and we're going to come back to this, by the way, okay? I'm not telling you, I'm just trying to tell you what's going on in the Bible, okay?

That's what I'm trying to do. Listen to what Paul does in verse 15, and by the way, now we're going to read verses 15 to 21, and just here's a thing. I'm preaching from the ESV, it's the version which I prefer, it's what I usually use.

If some of you use the NIV, the NIV actually has done something unbelievably helpful. It's very subtle, and those of you who read it might not notice it, but what the NIV has done is they put quote marks that begin at verse 15 and go all the way to verse 21.

I know, grammar geek moment, I put half of you to sleep by saying that, but here's the point. What you need to understand is that in verses 15 to 21, you are getting a summary of what Paul said to Peter.

[ 13 : 35 ] If you don't understand what you need to have firmly fixed in your mind, I almost asked some volunteer to come up here and stand up here so that I could sort of act it out and occasionally just look and say, you know, read these parts, looking at that person, because that's what, if you don't understand that, then the text is going to just confuse you and you'll try to do all these weird things to try to make the text understood.

Just look at verse 15. We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Well, what on earth does that mean? In fact, what we know is the majority of the congregation weren't Jewish people.

So if he's saying this to the congregation, it makes no sense. And all the other things in this little bit of the text, they're not going to make any sense. So what you have to understand is verses 15 to 21 is a summary of what Paul is calling Peter out about and how he's explaining why this is an unbelievably important issue.

So 15 to 21, now it makes sense, right? I don't know, you know, maybe if Ken there is, sorry Ken, I'm promoting you to Peter. So you're Peter, okay, and I'm just looking at you.

You're all now dead silent and I'm looking right at Peter and I say to Peter, Peter, you and me are Jews by birth. That's what you and I are. We're not pagans.

[ 15 : 02 ] You know, before we became Christians, we didn't go to the temple to have sex with the priestess as a way of worshipping God. We knew that was wrong. We know how to keep kosher.

We know how to do the sacrifices. You and me, we are Jews by birth. We are not pagans who are by definition sinners, according to us Jews. Verse 16.

Andrew, could you put this on? Could you all read this verse with me? This is a very important verse. And you'll notice, just before we're going to read it, you'll notice that basically he says the same thing three times, but in slightly different ways to get the point home.

And so if you could all read it with me, that would be very good. 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.

[ 16 : 11 ] See, he says the same thing three times, slightly different to bring home the emphasis that he wants to bring. And so what does justified mean? Justified means it's something that's done by God and declared by God.

That's what it means. It's God declaring that he's done something. is that just me? I did fade out all of a sudden, right?

Okay, sorry. Rhythm, good grief. There it is again. Should I move? Am I in a dead spot? Maybe.

Okay, we'll sort it out later. Sorry. So justified. I mean, look at that. Again, it says quite a few times throughout that text, 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.

[ 17 : 18 ] So what does that word justified mean? That word means it's an image from the law court. So it's an image of someone who has authority, proper authority to do something and then make a declaration.

So it's this idea of authority, proper authority, doing something and declaring something. And what they do is they declare innocence and or they declare that something has been made right.

Now, at a very, very technical, the most primary meaning is this idea that they've been declared innocent. And that's a very, very, very hard thing for Canadians to understand, right?

I've shared this before. The problem in Canada, it's not a problem. Thanks be to God for Canada. Let's continue to pray that this will be a rule of the law. But because of the influence of Christianity in Canada, we know that we are innocent until proven guilty.

Right? That's a product of the Christian faith that human beings against the state have an integrity against the state so that the state has to prove that I am guilty.

[ 18 : 30 ] I do not have to prove that I am innocent. That is one of the benefits of the gospel. It's been forgotten in Canada, but it's a Christian benefit of the worldview. But you know what? In most of the world, that is not the case.

In fact, if you think back, go back and read the book of Acts later on, what you see in the Roman Empire, if the state thinks you're guilty, you have to prove you're innocent. The state has all the cards, all the power, and if the state determines that you are guilty, if the state determines you're a slave and then have absolutely no power, if the state determines you're a woman and have no power, then you have no power.

It doesn't matter what the person from a privileged class has done to you. You have no status. You have no rights. They can do what they want. You are not a citizen.

And even citizens are fundamentally, basically, you have to prove you're innocent. And so in Paul's time, when a judge with authority declares they've done something and they declare that in fact, in a sense, you are a citizen, you have rights, and you were innocent, it's a big thing.

Think back to some of the books in some of the instances in the book of Acts. When Paul is preaching in Jerusalem and all of a sudden a riot breaks out. So what do the soldiers do?

[ 19 : 55 ] Do the soldiers come in and separate everybody and get them all in different rooms and try to figure out what went on because everyone is innocent until proven guilty? No. They grab Paul because he seems to have started it and they whip him.

Why? Paul is guilty until he can prove he's innocent. That's the way it is in most of the world. And it's been most of the world in most of the history.

It's probably how it works in places like North Korea and Saudi Arabia. The state has all the power and unless you're a privileged group you are guilty until proven innocent.

It's hard for us to understand. So a better way to understand is the same type of idea. It's an authoritative declaration combined with the person in authority doing something to declare that a person is made right.

And I've shared this before but it's a great analogy. I'll share it again a few more times before you start to all fall off in sleep. And a way to understand what being made right is is you imagine that there's a young mom and her husband's off on a business trip or he's off I don't know playing golf with his buddies and having a long time at the 19th hole or whatever it is but she's home alone with the kids.

[ 21 : 08 ] She comes home she's just really beat really bush rough day she says I'm just going to take these three kids to the family restaurant around the corner buy them a meal have a bit of a break and come home and she goes to the family restaurant and she has the restaurant trip from hell the kids are actually pretty well behaved but the waiters are rude to her the waiters take a long time the waiters ignore her the waiters make negative comments about her kids the waiters blame the kids for all the problems when they're just being slow they bring the wrong food they don't apologize it is the restaurant trip from hell to hell in hell and she finally just throws down her plastic pays the bill and she goes out and she's fighting tears she's so mad so hurt so embarrassed so angry and she's walking out of the restaurant and as she walks out of the restaurant an older woman is coming in and the older woman notices that this woman is really distressed and so the older woman stops her and says dear you know

I'm sorry you look really upset and the young woman she's just taken by the older woman's kindness and she just breaks out and tells her what happens and the older woman says I own this restaurant I'm going to make it right and she makes it right at cost to herself what might that mean I'm going to give you five gift certificates for free meals it's on me I'm going to bring that the staff's going to be fired I'm going to bring all the staff together I'm going to bring them back in the back room I'm going to tell them how wrong they were in treating you they all need some training some people are going to be fired I'm going to make some other changes she has the authority and at cost to herself she makes it right and that's what the Bible is saying here we know that a person is not made right with God by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ in other words

God is declaring and acting to make it right and it can only be done by God it can't be something that I can just declare that I'm going to make it right I can make it in fact that's the whole thing that works of the law are works of the law are our attempt to make it right you know and so what this text is saying is that is that God God sees our need he does what needs to be done at cost to himself he has the proper authority and he makes it a declaration that you George that you Ken that you Shirley that you Louise I have done what's needed to be done to make you innocent to give you status to make it right I declare that I have done it and that is now your status it's an official declaration and you'll notice there's this contrast that what doesn't work is works of the law and what Paul is saying here is it doesn't matter how much you meditate doesn't matter how much you do yoga it doesn't matter how many prayer flags and prayer wheels you set in motion and it doesn't matter how rich you are and it doesn't matter how perfect your family is and it doesn't matter how good you are at keeping kosher and it doesn't matter whether you make trips to Mecca and follow Ramadan it doesn't matter whatever your religion is whatever your spirituality is whatever your moral code is whatever your standard of success is even if it's the one that I myself wrote that all these things do show is show that you cannot keep them and none of them will work

Paul uses example works of the law because God himself to his people has given them a whole range of things of moral commands of helping them to understand that they have to be clean in his sight they have to be holy in his sight they have to be pure in his sight that and the whole point of the law was that people couldn't actually keep it and in Romans chapter 2 Paul extends this to show that God what is going to be shown fair that if people say well listen I didn't understand that it was wrong for me to cheat on my taxes I didn't understand that it was wrong for me to cheat on my wife I didn't understand that I had to have a concern for the poor I didn't have an understanding that sometimes I had to turn the other cheek it's not fair if you find me guilty God because I have not done these things and Romans 2 brilliantly says that all God does in those situations is say well that's very fine and what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you a summary of your life and all the moral judgments you have made about other people and about yourself and then I'm going to have that as a standards

I'm going to see how you lived up to your own moral standards and you can't even keep up to your own moral standards like if novelists are to be believed even sociopaths can't keep up to their own standards they get mad at themselves that they didn't kill the person right away I mean it's a terrible thing but they can't even keep up to their own moral standards sociopaths everyone will be silent before God and so what does it say again we know that a person is not going to be made right with God or declared right by God by God by our moral efforts 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 and faith in Christ faith just means it's a type of trust and giving and Jesus the person of Jesus and what he's done for us on the cross that's what we put our faith and trust in not on ourselves and and and all putting our trust in something and in some or in someone in this case putting our trust and our faith in Jesus and what he's done for us on the cross that always involves both a positive thing and a negative thing it's a little bit like a marriage vow right in the marriage vow you give yourself to the other person and you forsake all others and that's that's what faith in Christ is that we come to that point to believe that Jesus has to have done all that has to be done for us to be made right with God and we don't have any trust in something else now some of you are going to say

[ 27 : 52 ] George okay you asked to extend some mercy to you about this racism thing I'm still a little bit troubled by it I'm a little bit conflicted now about it like what's are you saying George that Christians should only have these conversations about the gospel and never confront racism and prejudice or like George I'm a little bit confused there seems to be at least a nuance or something here that I don't know if you've got it's a very very valid concern so let's let's read verses 17 to 19 and now what we need to do here we need to remember as we read it right sorry Ken I'm going to use you as Peter and I'm Paul again right we're hearing the summary of what Paul said to Peter and everybody's listening in and what that means as well is who are some of the people who've been listening in some of the people who are listening in are the people who caused the problem because you know the people who caused the problem what they what they've said to Peter probably with their is that they maybe said something like this to Peter

Peter you know Jesus said that everything in the Old Testament is God's word and you know God's word's very clear you've got to keep kosher you've got to practice the cleanliness laws you've got to make sure that you have nothing that's even vaguely contaminated by idolatry you've got to do this you've got to do that you've got to do this and Peter surely you can't be talking about trusting Jesus in such a way that now you trust Jesus and it means you're going to be sinning all the time like surely it's obvious that you need to have not only faith in Jesus but also keep the law you know just as some of us might say George surely yeah yeah yeah yeah we understand that but surely you understand that you've got to not only have faith in Jesus but you've got to have the right views on abortion you've got to have the right views on politics you've got to be Republican you've got to be Democrat you have to be for Trump you have to be against

Trump how on earth can you be a Christian and for Trump how can earth can you be a Christian and be against Trump how can you be a Christian and not in favor of Black's Lives Matter how can you be a Christian and not do this how can you be a Christian and not keep kosher and so Paul is talking to Peter and the people who caused the trouble are in the room and those who are just confused are in the room and Peter says in verse 17 Peter but if in our endeavor you and me to be justified in Christ we too were found to be sinners is Christ a servant of sin certainly not what's he saying here he's referring to what people say George you're a Christian and you're for

Trump you're a sinner how can that you're against Trump you're in favor of black lives matter you're against black lives can Jesus lead you into that sin because you see in our mind you have to have the gospel plus this and Paul says certainly not verse 18 and here's now he's really going to the law if I rebuild what I tore down I prove myself to be a transgressor for through the law I died to the law so that I might live to God basically what he's saying is listen if you read the Old Testament he's going to do this now in chapter three and chapter four he's going to give about four or five different examples of how the Old Testament points to the fact you can't keep the Old Testament the entire Old Testament is pointing to the fact that only God can make you right with himself and only God can act to make you right with himself and once he's done it that's what you put your faith and trust in if you could put up the next point

Andrew the gospel plus anything means you don't have a gospel at all it's the gospel plus nothing that's the gospel just you know in terms of this racism thing and we're going to move on to some other really important points here you know one of the things about this letter and those of you might remember depending on Jesus either died and rose again in the year 30 or the year 33 I think most scholars say it was one of those two springs of 30 or 33 and this letter was probably written in the year 48 it might very well be the first part of the New Testament that was actually written and if he died in 33 and this is written in 48 then 15 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus it's very very interesting that all the way through the letter slavery is only used as an example of evil slavery is only used as an example of evil in fact one of the famous verses in



[ 33 : 24 ] Galatians is Galatians 5 verse 1 for freedom Christ has set us free stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery and the other thing is that this text Paul doesn't dress racism directly but he in fact deals with racism at a very very very deep level because the gospel when we understand that we are made right by something that God has done for us and that he does everything to make us right with himself and then after he's done everything to make us right with himself and we put our faith and trust in him and he declares George you are mine you are mine despite the fact that you have the wrong view on Trump or the

Andrew as the gospel comes alive to me and I write this down because if you're writing this down then you're writing this to me as the gospel comes alive to me racism and prejudice should die in me like while on one level it doesn't look like he's doing what Canadians want by talking about the gospel in fact as the gospel grips us in that the hymn that Deborah had sing hands I bring I have a master's degree I'm a Canadian I've been married a long time nothing in my hands I bring simply in the cross I cling I just have a couple of minutes I have to wrap this up there's a very common problem that Christians have if you're here and you're not a Christian you're trying to figure it out you might not know this but it's a been a profound moral failure in their lives or financial failure or relational failure and they no longer feel that they are almost worthy or that they can come to church because of their failure you see they don't really believe

I don't really believe that I am made right with God because God does everything to make me right with him I actually believe it is connected to my moral excellence my relational excellence my financial excellence my spiritual excellence look at what Paul says the Bible says in verse 20 I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me that actually could you put this up we're going to read it together I forgot that could you read this with me I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me this is a very very very wonderful and precious text text text you see that bottom part

I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me that summarizes the atonement what Jesus has done for me and for you on the cross my faith is in him he loved me and gave himself for me and you know part of the thing about becoming a Christian is we say you need to invite Jesus to come into your life and the Bible also talks about how we have to be in Christ and notice how this verse has these two things that that's how we become a Christian either through a very conscious decision or for those of us who have been raised in Christian homes or it's a slower conversion process where at some point in time we've crossed a divide and we realize that Christ has come into our lives look how it says it I have been crucified with Christ that somehow what that's describing is that somehow I'm in Christ it is no longer

I who live because somehow I'm in Christ but Christ who lives in me you know this is the wonderful text that it's not that my arm is long enough to reach Jesus but that his arm is long enough to reach mine and it's not that my grip is strong enough to hold on to Jesus hand because my hand sometimes it's strong sometimes it's weak sometimes it wants to do something completely different but when Jesus puts his hand in my exchange he never lets me go he never lets me go he never lets me go and you see this other thing which is so wonderful about this text so here's the thing the average Canadian the average Canadian basically what they'll say is I try to live a good life and when I die I'm going to go to a better place and sort of the idea is at the end of you got a

[ 39 : 40 ] D life you know D is better than an F into a better place you know and some people live a B plus life some people live an A life or an A plus life some people live a D life there's only a few people and we all know who they are they either vote for Trump or didn't vote for Trump or something like that but depending on your politics but you know they get the F's they go to the bad place but you know and so in a sense my justification is in the future the story that I was sharing when I've had many conversations with people and it's not just something you know there's been many times in my life that if I wasn't the pastor I would feel too guilty to come to church I'm justification is in our current moral or spiritual or emotional or relational or financial excellence but if you look at this text my justification is in the past because

Jesus died in the past that when he died for me in the past in the past not how good my sermon is today not how good I will be as a pastor in three weeks not how good as a husband I'm going to be in five he knew all of that that my justification all of my life is justified by something that God did in the past it makes it more certain that as it says in the book of Romans nothing can separate me from the love of God not because I'm proud not because I'm in or anything like that but because Jesus did it all my justification the thing that made me right with God is in the past not the future not the present in the past and I experience the benefits of it in the present how important is this

Paul brings it home in a very powerful way my final time of using Ken as Peter and you're listening in and what do we all know about Peter we would all know about Peter that Peter said to Jesus when Jesus said I've come to die on the cross Peter says no way Jose not for you and that when it came time that in the last supper Jesus says I'm going to be betrayed I'm going to die on the cross tomorrow Peter says we're all going to die with you and Peter says and Peter and Peter follows along and Peter denies and Peter goes off crying into the night and now Paul stands in front of Peter and he says verse 21 we'll start just a little bit before that you know and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me and he says to Peter I do not nullify the grace of God now he says to

Peter for if the righteousness that is being able to be made right with God if that were through the law Peter then Christ died for no purpose Christ's death was only a tragic vain waste please stand just if there's you know this is a very good time there's no time better than right now maybe the Lord has touched your heart in different ways just for those of you who just you know one of the reasons the mission statement of this church is making disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel learning to live for God's glory is precisely because we need to be gripped by the gospel so we need to know who

Jesus is and what he did for us on the cross and if you've never given your life to Jesus there is no better time than right now just in your own words to say Jesus could you please come into my life and be my savior and my lord I forsake all others may you come into my life and be my savior and my lord you don't need any fancier language than that you don't have to try to remember a sinner's prayer that you heard on TV five years ago there's no magic formula there's just you calling out to God and there's no better time than to do that right now and for all of us let's just bow our heads in prayer Father thank you for Jesus thank you for who he is God he's your son thank you that he was born of Mary without stopping being your son but he became fully human thank you for his perfect life thank you for his death upon the cross thank you father that he did all of these things because he loved me he loved all of the people who are here he loves the city of

[ 44 : 53 ] Ottawa he loves the North Koreans he loves those in Saudi Arabia he loves those in Singapore he loves those in Nigeria that he died for people irrespective of their race or their religion father we thank you for Jesus that he died on the cross and we thank you that by his death on the cross you have done everything that needs to do to put people right with you and that we are purely and utterly only to receive it by faith father thank you for the gift of faith for putting our faith and trust in Jesus father pour out your holy spirit upon us make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel learning to live for your glory and we ask this in the name of Jesus Amen