

# Justified by Faith - Part 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] One of the lifelong temptations that we who believe in God will always face is the temptation! It's a temptation to try to make ourselves accepted by God, by the good things we do, and by the bad things we don't do. We face this temptation in different ways, to different degrees, based on what we know about God and his word. There are some people whose understanding of God's word has persuaded them that they are good works. They are regular church attendants. They are serving in the church, giving to the church, giving to charity, receiving communion. They believe these things help to earn their salvation and their acceptance before God. However, we at Kingdom Life Church, together with all Protestants who hold true to the Reformed view of salvation, don't believe that. We believe that salvation cannot be earned and salvation is not deserved. We believe that it is by God's free, sovereign grace that people are saved.

And yet, the reality is, even for us, even for those of us who are Reformed, we still face this lifelong temptation to try to make ourselves accepted by God through the good works we do and through the bad works we do not do.

And so, in an ongoing way, we need to hear the gospel. In an ongoing way, we need to be reminded of the grace of God by which sinners are saved and accepted by God, separate and apart from any work that we do.

The churches of Galatia, which the Apostle Paul himself planted into whom this letter of Galatians, which we have come to once again this morning, was written, is a reminder to us, a reminder to us that receiving the true gospel of God is not an absolute safeguard against yielding to this temptation.

The Apostle Paul himself founded these churches, yet, as we have been seeing in this series, this church moved away from the gospel of God's free grace to a works-oriented gospel, seeking to earn and even maintain acceptance before God.

[ 2 : 57 ] And that's the reason the Apostle Paul wrote the letter. And there's much that we can learn from the era of the Galatians and to help to safeguard ourselves from falling into the same era.

This morning, we are again turning our attention to Galatians 2, verses 15 through 21.

You may recall that we considered this section of the letter back on the 28th of May. And I really sensed, as I was finished with the message, I sensed the prompting, and I sensed it to be from the Lord, that this is so important that we needed to spend a bit more time on it.

And I, therefore, decided to do a part two to that first sermon. So if you've not yet done so, please turn in your Bibles to Galatians 2.

And this morning, we will be considering, once again, verses 15 through 21. Galatians 2, beginning at verse 15.

[ 4 : 09 ] I'm reading from the English Standard Version. We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners.

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law, no one will be justified.

But if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not.

For 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.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lived 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.

[ 5 : 31 ] I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness was through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you this morning for your word. Lord, in particular, we thank you for this section of your word that reminds us of the basis upon which sinners are justified in your sight.

Lord, as we come to this text a second time, I ask that you would grant me grace to proclaim the truth of this passage to those who are assembled here.

And in particular, Lord, I pray that where there may have not been clarity or a sound understanding of what it means to be justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

I ask, O Lord, that you would, by the illumination of the Spirit, bring, by the help that he gives, enable me to proclaim your word faithfully and enable us all to receive the truth of your word this morning.

[ 6 : 58 ] Father, you know what you need. And I ask, Lord, that you would grant it in abundance. Whatever your word this morning, as it is preached, we pray. In Christ's name.

Amen. In these verses, the Apostle Paul makes an important point that the entire world needs to hear, that the entire world needs to come to believe with great conviction.

And the point is this. Sinners are justified by God through faith in Christ alone. Sinners are justified by God through faith in Christ alone.

And this, dear friends, is the hope and the promise of the gospel. Now, the last time we considered this text, I asked and answered two questions. How does God justify us?

And why does God justify us? This morning, my approach is going to be different. And I want to do two things. First, I want to take some time reviewing what it means to be justified by faith in Christ alone.

[ 8 : 10 ] And then second, I want to take the remaining time applying what it means to be justified by faith in Christ alone.

So first, reviewing justification by faith. In his commentary on Galatians, this particular section, deceased British pastor and theologian John Stott wrote the following.

In these verses, an important word occurs for the first time in Galatians. It is central to the meaning of the epistle, central to the gospel preached by Paul, and indeed central to Christianity itself.

Nobody has understood Christianity who does not understand this word. It is the word justified. And this is why we're reviewing what it means to be justified by faith in Christ this morning.

Because John Stott is right. Nobody has understood Christianity who does not understand the word justified. And one of the things that you should notice is that Paul uses this word justified three times in verse 16 alone.

[ 9 : 32 ] And then one time in verse 17. Again, let me define justification. Justification is the immediate act.

The immediate act. Not the eventual act. But the immediate act by which God declares sinners righteous because of Christ's death in their place.

So when a person is justified, that person is declared not guilty or righteous in God's sight.

And really, this is what the Bible is about. The Bible is about this question. It answers this question. How are sinners made right with God?

How are sinners made right with a holy God? And the answer is through justification. I marveled this morning that there are people in church history who have lost their lives standing for this truth.

[ 10 : 42 ] That we are justified. That we are made right. That God says not guilty to us. For no other reason than putting faith in Christ alone.

Christ and nothing else. And this is what the Apostle Paul was concerned about in the Galatian church.

This is why he wrote this letter of Galatians. This is what he is addressing in particular in these verses that we have come to. He is arguing against justification by works of the law.

And for justification through faith in Christ alone. He is making the case for the impossibility of human effort to justify us or to make us righteous before God.

And when Paul talks about the law, he is referring to all of God's commandments. All of God's requirements. All of it. And this point when he says that we cannot be justified by the law.

[ 11 : 51 ] His point is not that there is something wrong with the law. He makes it very clear a little later on in this letter. In Galatians 3, 10 through 12. He says, For those who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

For it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them. Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law.

For the righteous shall live by faith. For the law is not of faith. Rather, the one who does them shall live by them. That's our problem. Our problem is that we can't keep all of God's law.

It brings us under a curse. And Paul says it is futile. It is useless. It is a waste of time to try to fulfill God's law. Because you can't.

And the irony is that many people who are trying to do good and trying to not do bad, to be justified by God, many of them are not even attempting to keep God's requirements.

[12:59] They're doing something less. And still deceived in believing that somehow they can see the holy God. Paul says it's an impossibility because we cannot satisfy all of God's requirements.

And so if we offend in just one small part, he says you're under a curse because you've offended all of it. You see, with God, 99.99% is not good enough.

God requires 100% perfection. God requires 100% perfection. The prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 64 verse 6 says, All of our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

And really the only reason that we are deceived in believing that we can somehow in our efforts please God is because we focus from our own perspective on outward performance and outward fulfillment of the law.

And we ignore the inward realities. We ignore the reality of our sinful heart. We ignore the reality that even our best thoughts are not perfect before God.

[14:10] We ignore the reality that even when we pray, it is not a perfect prayer before God. And unless mediated by Jesus Christ, cannot be accepted before God.

It is impossible to engage in human effort to be justified in God's sight.

Because we're a fallen people. Now it's important to know, though, that God does not justify us in a vacuum.

God is not like the powerful king who just says, Hey, don't worry about it. Go, and I won't punish you. He's not like that. He doesn't just tear up the demerit.

God justifies sinners by his grace. And he does so on the basis of the perfect life that Jesus lived and the substitutionary death that he died on the cross for sinners.

[15:22] This is why Paul says in verse 21 of Galatians 2, Seeking to be justified by any other means than faith in Christ alone nullifies the grace of God and communicates the grace of God and the grace of God and the grace of God and the grace of God and the grace of God.

That he really didn't have to die because we could be justified some other way. Now, the Bible uses words like blind, deaf, and dumb, and dead to describe sinners.

Those are the words, those are the kinds of words that the Bible uses to describe sinners. Those words described all of us before we came to Christ. We were blind, we were deaf, and we were dead spiritually.

That was our condition. So exactly how does a sinner come to the place to express faith in Christ, to be justified by God, if this is his condition?

Blind, and deaf, and dead. Let's look at Ephesians chapter 2.

[16:52] You can just turn to the right in your Bibles, right over to Ephesians chapter 2. And I want us to read a section of Scripture where the Apostle Paul describes the condition of every single human being.

Starting in verse 1. He writes, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

Now, obviously, he's talking about a spiritual death because we are physically alive and walking around. But it is the spiritual death that he is addressing. Following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Among whom we all once lived in the passion of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind. And were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

That was our condition. We were dead spiritually and we were just following the course of this world. We are following the prince of the power of the air.

[18:19] We were living out the passions and desires of our flesh. And we were by nature. We were objects of the wrath of God.

We were subject to his wrath like the rest of mankind. And then Paul says in verse 4, But God, but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead

in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved. And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. I read this passage this morning because when we talk about justification by faith, putting faith in Jesus Christ, it is easy for us to think that, okay, the way I got saved or the way somebody else is going to be saved is they just decide one day to put faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 19 : 56 ] But see, the witness of Scripture says that that's not possible. That's not possible because we were dead in trespasses and sin. And before we can even begin to put faith in Jesus Christ, God has to come to us and he has to awaken us from our death.

And this is what Paul says that he did. He made us alive. He resurrected us spiritually. He made us alive together with Christ.

And he says that's by grace. And then he goes on to say, he says, so that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. God wakes us from the dead. God grants us the gift of repentance. And he gives us faith. He gives us the gift of faith to face faith in Jesus Christ. We don't do that because we are wiser or smarter. We don't do that because we're more moral. We do that because God is merciful. We do that because God has been gracious to wake us from spiritual death and bring us to spiritual life and to grant us repentance and to grant us faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 16 ] That's how we're justified. That's how we're justified. And notice where good works come in.

Good works don't come in before salvation. Good works come in after salvation. And that's the point that Paul makes in verse 10. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Not by good works. For good works. Which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The great reformer Martin Luther said, We are saved by faith alone.

But the faith that saves is never alone. And what the point is that it's not enough to simply say, Well, yes, I'm saved by faith.

You can perhaps say that in the moment that we have come to Christ or in that season we have come to Christ, but eventually works have to be manifest. If that is true saving faith, there will be good works that accompany it.

[ 22 : 23 ] But the good works are the result of salvation. The good works don't produce salvation. They are the evidence of salvation. They're not the cause of salvation.

And this is the truth of how God justifies sinners.

How God declares them not guilty. If you would turn with me. Not with me, but by yourself. Turn Romans chapter 4.

It's going to the left. Romans chapter 4. And again, Paul writing, and he is using Abraham as an example.

And I'm laboring on this point this morning because there are people who literally believe that they must get their lives together, whatever that means. That they must stop doing some things and start doing some things and then they can come to God.

[ 23 : 28 ] And they believe that what God does is God justifies the good or he justifies the righteous. Scripture says, no, that's not so. Because first of all, our righteousness is like filthy rags.

The best that we bring to God is unacceptable to God. So no matter how much a person takes to clean up or to stop doing this and to stop doing that, whatever the worst sins you may want to think about, and then they come to God, that's not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible does not teach that God justifies the good or he justifies the righteous. And Paul uses the example of Abraham in Romans chapter 4.

Look at what he says, starting in verse 1. What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather, according to the flesh?

For if Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say?

[ 24 : 31 ] Abraham believed God and it was counted, it was counted to him as righteousness. Notice, he believed God.

It was counted to him as righteous. Abraham was a moon worshiper. He was an idol worshiper. God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and made promises to him and Abraham believed God and the Bible says God counted that to him as righteousness.

Verse 4 says, Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due. And to the one who does not work, but believes in him, notice, who justifies the ungodly.

That's who God justifies. One translation says he justifies the wicked. God justifies the ungodly. Every single person who comes to God and who is justified by God in and of him or herself is ungodly.

That's who God justifies. Now I know that we're reading this this morning, but I can imagine that there's some of us because of all that we've heard for far longer than you're hearing this this morning, this is hard to accept in our hearts because somehow we believe that we come to God in our pristine condition and God says, okay, now you could be my child.

[ 26 : 04 ] That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says God. See, this is the mercy of God. But again, he doesn't do it in a vacuum. God is not just saying, oh, you wicked person, I say not guilty to you.

No, he's not saying that. He is saying, oh, you wicked person, I say not guilty to you because of my son, because of his perfect life, because of his substitutionary death for your sin.

I forgive you and I declare that you are righteous in my sight. But we don't cease to be unrighteous in and of ourselves. Over time, we grow in sanctification and we will become less sinful, but we will never become perfect and free of sin in this life.

And so we have two realities. We have this reality where we in and of ourselves are sinners. But we have this declaration of a holy, perfect, just God over us.

He says, you're not guilty because of my son. And he lived the perfect life that you could never live and he died the substitutionary death, the death you deserve to die.

[ 27 : 14 ] God justified the ungodly. And see, brothers and sisters, when we recognize this, when we see that this is the truth, then we begin to rest in God's justifying act over us for our acceptance before God.

We cease to strive. We cease to try to earn our way with God. It doesn't mean that we don't resist sin. It doesn't mean that we don't pursue holiness. But we don't rest any stock in those things to be accepted before God because he's already accepted us before Jesus Christ because of Jesus Christ.

So that's what it means to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. So how do we then apply what it means to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ in our everyday lives?

How do we live that out? That's my second and final point. Applying justification by faith. I think, first of all, we need to be increasingly aware of the unchanging truth of the doctrine of justification.

We need to accept the truth of justification as it is in Scripture. For example, we need to remember that our justification by God is not based on anything we have done in the past or hope to do in the future.

[ 29 : 07 ] It's not based on what God sees in the future. We need to remember that our justification before God is perfect for all times.

Perfect for all times. And there are no degrees of justification. Do you realize that when I have gotten up off of my knees and I have poured my heart out to God and I have prayed and confessed every sin I'm aware of?

When I leave that place of prayer and I commit sin, whatever sin I may fall into, whether by act or attitude, I am no less justified when I have sinned than I was justified as I prayed or even when I was saved.

God's justification is not like the tide that is high and low and has ebbs and flow and moves. No, God's justification is constant. He loves me no less when I sin than he does when I don't.

Our justification is constantly at the divine high tide level. It is always true whether sin is active in our lives or not.

[ 30 : 36 ] Our justification is purely based on the grace and the mercy of God. And those who are justified cannot be unjustified.

I mean, think about it. If God justifies the ungodly, what would cause him to unjustify you? If he justifies the ungodly, what would cause him to unjustify you? It can't be sin. It can't be because he justifies the ungodly.

And the same basis upon which he justified us, he continues to keep us justified and that is Jesus Christ in his perfect life that doesn't change and his substitutionary death that doesn't change. But see, there are many of us, again, this is kind of hard to receive. It's hard to study these wonderful truths and not reflect in my own mind on things I was taught.

[ 31 : 56 ] I had a youth pastor and he would say to us, he would tell us, he would say, if you commit a sin before, if you commit a sin and you die before you ask for forgiveness, you will burst hell wide open.

And he would dramatize it. because no sin could enter there. And I honestly, for many, many years, even as a pastor, I dreaded, I thought, you know what, with my luck, I'd probably commit a sin right before I die and end up in hell.

Even though I served a lot all those years. And one of the, it's hard to even find words to describe this morning, the discovery of the truth of justification by faith.

And I said to Alexey, the night that this dawned on me, I said that this is like being born again and again. When I recognized that my acceptance before God was not based on my performance, that it was based on the performance of another that does not change, and that God will keep me to the very end.

And if I am justified, if I am truly justified, I will always be justified. And it totally changed my walk with the Lord, my resting in the Lord, my trust of the Lord, my honesty with the Lord.

[ 33 : 34 ] sanctification, and so we have to be aware of these truths to be able to live out these truths.

Our justification is an exclusive work of God from start to finish. We didn't add anything to the beginning, we don't need to add anything to the end. It is all of him.

Now, again, sanctification is something else, but not justification. Sanctification should cooperate with the Spirit of God. It is a division of labor, and we become less sinful and more Christ-like, but not our justification.

Our justification is exclusively a work of God and purely by the grace of God.

Brothers and sisters, we have to become absolutely convinced, persuaded, not because I'm saying it this morning, but because you've seen it in the pages of Scripture, and if you haven't seen it, take some time to fall over these Scriptures that you may be persuaded for yourself.

[ 34 : 48 ] We must be convinced that we are accepted by God no other way. We are accepted by God, separate and apart from any work that we do. God accepts us.

It's righteous and excites. In his book, *The Christian Life, A Doctrinal Introduction*, Pastor and Theologian Sinclair Ferguson writes the following, the glory of the gospel is that God has declared Christians to be rightly related to him in spite of their sins.

But our greatest temptation and mistake is to try to smuggle character into his work of grace. How easily we fall into the trap of assuming that we remain justified only so long as there are grounds in our character for our justification.

But Paul's teaching is that nothing we do ever contributes to our justification.

brothers and sisters, I believe this is true for all of us at different times, in different ways, and to different degrees. We all try to smuggle character.

[ 36 : 06 ] We try to smuggle the good things we do and the bad things we don't do into God's work of grace. Because it seems too good to be true that despite our sinful attitudes and our sinful actions, God's justification of us doesn't change.

sometimes we give in to our feelings of guilt. Even after we've asked for forgiveness, we give in to our feelings of guilt and we feel this need to try to earn our way back to God and in his acceptance through good character, through good behavior.

It's almost like we are on some kind of a probation with God when we have sinned. Because we have not accepted the truth, that God justifies the ungodly.

And he therefore maintains our justification in a perfect way, in an unchanging way, no matter what.

many of us when we don't actively sin, it's so easy to think that God's acceptance of us is based partly or wholly on a good behavior.

[ 37 : 31 ] And we have more faith for him to answer our prayers. We have more faith for him to do certain things. And even sometimes may find ourselves feeding our good works as we pray to him.

And truth be told, we are just as accepted to God when we feel most sinful, when we are most aware of our sins. We are just as accepted by God.

And he is just as disposed towards us as a compassionate, loving, heavenly father. as when we are on our best day.

All devotions done, all the Bible reading done. We've been kind to everyone we could think of. God is just as predisposed towards us with grace and compassion and mercy as our heavenly father as when we fall on our faces before him.

Christ is the only ground for God's justification in our lives, no matter what's going on in our lives, if we belong to him. Now, in the Apostle Paul's day, and this is one of the things we see in the letter of Galatians, there were some who objected to the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone, because they believed that it would lead to license.

[ 39 : 05 ] They believed that if you say to people, well, you're not under the law anymore, it would lead them to a life of indiscipline and a life of unholiness, a life of sin, believing false.

You're not bound by the law anymore. And on the face of it, that is a good argument. On the face of it, that is a good argument.

But that's no reason for us to not proclaim the truth of what God's word says. And the truth is that this does arise, and the apostle Paul recognized it.

He recognized it, for example, in the letter to the Romans. If you would turn there with me, Romans chapter 6. Notice in verse 1, he says, what shall we say then?

Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? He anticipates the argument. But if you would go over to verse 15, I want to read this section through verse 19, and consider what Paul says.

[ 40 : 27 ] What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? By no means. The translation says, God forbid.

Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

Let me say this this morning. The reason we will proclaim the fullness and the freeness of the grace of God and that he justifies the ungodly is that the truly justified, the truly saved, this is what happens to them.

Notice what Paul says, but thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart, from the heart, to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

[ 41 : 45 ] And having been set free from sin, having become slaves of righteousness, see, something really happened. God transforms us from slaves of sin to slaves of righteousness.

We have new desires, we have new appetites, not perfectly, but sufficiently. And there's an awareness that our appetites have changed, there's an awareness that God has truly transformed us.

It's not just something being gritting our teeth and saying, I'm going to do this. No, he puts a new heart in us, a new desire in us. And Paul says we have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which we have been committed.

We have become slaves of righteousness. In verse 19, I'm speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.

Paul says that's what we do. He says we don't say to people, you better put them back under the law so they can behave. You better not tell them about the free race of God because they will go into life.

[ 43 : 03 ] And he says no, that's not what we do. We remind them something has happened to you. You are no longer a slave of sin. You are now to be a slave of righteousness and you have been transformed from the heart to be obedient to the standard of teaching that you have received.

the apostle John addresses it in a slightly different way. He talks about it. And one of the things he says is it is an impossibility for the one who has been born of God to continue in a life of sin. An impossibility. And so what happens is when we proclaim the gospel of God's free grace, when we proclaim that sin has no bearing on our acceptance before God if there's an unconverted person who takes that and says oh I can say Lord forgive me and then just go and live my life of sin like the devil, that's on them.

That's up to them, they're deceived by themselves. But that's no reason for us to withhold the truth of the grace of God to sinners who in it of themselves are hopeless and who need to have confidence that their salvation is not resting on their performance but it is resting on the performance of another who has satisfied God's righteous requirement in his life and his death. And God demonstrated it by raising him from the dead. That's who he rests in. those of you who are reading table talk and if you're following the devotionals for this month you would know that this month the devotionals are focused on the doctrine of justification.

[ 45 : 03 ] I just thought in the providence of the Lord, here we are in the book of Galatians, had no idea what table talk would be about in the month of June and it is on the doctrine of justification. If you haven't read the Wednesday devotional, I encourage you to read it.

The devotional stresses, the one on Wednesday stresses the importance of the doctrine of justification, but in particular it distinguishes between the Protestant, the Reformed Protestant view and the Roman Catholic view of justification.

The Roman Catholics would say that they believe in justification by faith as well. And this is why the Reformers had to add another word to that doctrine.

It's not just believing in justification by faith in Christ, it is believing in justification by faith in Christ alone.

because the Roman Catholics do not believe in justification by faith in Christ alone. They do not believe that it is alone.

[ 46 : 20 ] They believe that you have to do other things as well. As a matter of fact, they believe that it is through water baptism that you are brought into the state of justification and it is through penance, doing penance, that you maintain the state of justification when you sin.

So for them, justification by faith is not alone. It is accompanied by other things. Whereas for us, those of us who stand in the tradition of the Reformers, who stand in the tradition of the Reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin, we believe that our justification is by faith in Christ alone.

Faith in Christ plus nothing else. not baptism, not our works and our performance, not all the good that we do, although we do those good things as evidence that we are saved, they don't add any merit to our salvation.

The Roman Catholics taught that, the Roman Catholics continued to teach that, and that was one of the central issues of the Reformation. That's why men lost their lives for this truth, that God justifies us for no other reason than faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Martin Luther, some 500 years ago, wrote these words about how important it is to understand the doctrine of justification.

[ 48 : 03 ] He writes, this is the truth of the gospel. It is also the principal article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consisted.

Most necessary it is, therefore, that we should know this article well. Brothers and sisters, we need to know this article of justification well. Teach it to others and beat it into their heads continually.

We need to beat it into our own heads first because we can so easily disregard God's word, go on our feelings, go on what we hear, and return justification on its head.

faith in Christ. I trust that this doctrine of justification by faith alone, in Christ alone, brings comfort to every single person who has indeed put his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

faith in God. So when we sin, when Satan reminds us of our past sins or he fiercely accuses us, we can take comfort from this truth that we are accepted by God through faith in Christ alone.

[ 49 : 29 ] And nothing can change us. Absolutely nothing can change us. Our feelings don't change it. The things that we do don't change it.

And I pray that this truth will encourage our hearts every single day and that we will live in view of the great mercy of God that justifies your life.

Let's pray.