

Justified by the Faith of Jesus Christ

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

All right, take your Bibles and go with me to Galatians chapter 2, please. Galatians chapter 2. And before we begin today, I want to ask you to pray for Charlotte Penrod also.

She is a young lady with double pneumonia right now, and so she could definitely use your prayers. And it's been going on for quite a while, so I would really ask you to pray. Go with me to Galatians chapter 2 and verse 14.

You really need your Bible tonight, today, this morning, whatever time it is. And you need a sheet of paper, and you need to get this down because this is life-changing.

When you realize that salvation in everything is the Lord Jesus. And before the day is over, before this morning is over, you're going to learn more about justification. You're going to understand what the Bible says about justification and what that's doing with us.

[1 : 05] You're going to learn that we are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ. In the story, there's this big argument that's going to happen. There's this big argument that's going to happen because Paul is defending salvation by faith.

And Paul is trying to say, don't be bringing us back under Jewish rules. Don't be trying to put us back under the law. And that's what's going to go on.

So I want you to go with me first. As a way of introduction, I want to go back through verses 14 and following. Just because you need to mark this in your Bible and to have it clear, it's all together in one passage of Scripture.

Look with me at verse 14. Chapter 2, verse 14. And to underline this, or put a circle around, when, when, when I saw they walked not uprightly.

You see, what had happened was, Paul is there and Peter is there. And when Peter had come down to Antioch and he got with the regular people, I really thought about having an illustration today and putting over here some black people and Indian people and some Chinese people and some Spanish people and just put them all over here and then have Paul and Peter over here working with them.

[2 : 23] So you'd see what's happening. And they're working with them and they're eating and they're just enjoying each other's fellowship. And then these racist Jews showed up over here.

James. And he came down from there. And when James came from Jerusalem, they walked in and Peter looked over and said, Oh no, the guys from Jerusalem are here. And I don't really want to be seen acting like a Gentile, which is, for them, there are two races on the planet, Jew and Gentile.

And they don't want to see it. And so Peter kind of gets up and goes, Oh, and he slides back over and he said, Hey, I don't eat with those kind of people. I don't eat with those kind of people. And I want you to know I don't eat with those kind of people.

And when he did that, Paul stood up and said, I don't know who you think you are, but you can't act like that. You can't act one way when they're here and another way when they're not here. That's not happening.

That's what the story's got going on. Read verse 14 again with me. When I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel. Underline that. According to the truth of the gospel.

[3 : 26] The gospel is God loves everybody. Could you say amen right there? God loves you if you're green or white or purple or blue or red. God loves you. And he wants you saved. And when we get saved in Jesus, we are equal.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ. Okay, I'll do that again. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you. That's right. Now look at it. When I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, Hey, you're a Jew.

And you've been living like a Gentile. Not as the Jews. Verse 14 still. Why are you compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews? Jews. You understand every Jew had had a problem being a Jew.

Being a Jew was pretty hard. I mean, being a Jew meant you got circumcised on the eighth day. Okay, that's over. You don't even know about that. You don't remember that. But you're going to spend the rest of your life knowing you can't live up.

You're going to spend the rest of your life knowing there's rule after rule after rule. And so you have to dumb down the rules so you can brag about having done them. The apostle Paul, before he got saved, said, Well, concerning the law, I was blameless.

[4 : 37] And what he meant by that was the way we teach the law now as Jews, I really did good. But what Jesus, when he came to preach, said, If you don't have more righteousness than the scribes and the Pharisees, you ain't going to go to heaven.

So, because it wasn't the real stuff. And so there's this argument going on. Verse 14. After the matter of Jews, why are you compelling them to live like that? Verse 16. I want you to underline this in your Bible, please.

And I want you to read it with me, starting with a man. I want you to see that. Knowing that a man. And we're going to read down to the comma. Works of the law. Are you ready? Could you read that out loud with me?

Are you ready? Let's go. A man is not justified by the works of the law. Would you say that with me again? A man is not justified by the works of the law.

Now let's throw the word knowing that. Let's read it all the way to the comma. Everybody together. You ready? Read that with me. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.

[5 : 34] Now that word know is a pretty intense word. You know, it's like we know that. Everybody knows that. That's an understood. That's a given. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.

Now from that, let's read the next comma. Are you ready? Read with me the next comma. From comma to comma. But by the faith of Jesus Christ. Would you hear it? Say that with me. Ready? But by the faith of Jesus Christ.

A man is not justified by the works of the law. But? By the faith of Jesus Christ. Okay. Now then go with me if you would. Verse 16. Let's see. We'll start with the next comma and go to the next comma.

Are you ready? Say that with me. Are you ready? Even as? Even as we have believed in Jesus Christ. Well, that's weak. Let's take a reading lesson. Do it again with me. Ready? Even we have believed in Jesus Christ.

Paul says, Peter, me and you both, we got saved by believing in Jesus. What you pulling off here? What you trying to do to these Gentiles? How'd you and me get saved? We got saved by believing in Jesus Christ.

[6 : 39] That we might be saved. Look at verse 16 where it says, justified by the faith of Christ. Justified. Put a circle around that. Justified by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Verse 16 still. Not by the works of the law. Not by the works of the law. And then I'd like you to read that last part starting in verse 16 where it says, By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

That last part of the verse. Can you get that with me? Let's read that out loud if you would. Ready? Not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law. How much flesh gets justified by the law?

Oh, I got to wake up in the morning and say, oh, let me, what would, 10 commandments, 10 commandments. Okay, start checking. He said, no, no, no, that's not how it works. Oh, got to be, I got to get circumcised. I got to, I got to eat at the right place.

I got to not eat at the wrong place. I can't be with the wrong people. I got all this I got to do. He said, no, no, no, no, no, that's not how it works. We are justified by faith, by the faith of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 44] Amen or no? Okay. He said, that's simple. We all know that already. Well, Paul didn't think he did. Holy Spirit didn't. That's why he put it in the book so we'd be reminded of it. So go with me if you would.

Go if you would. Let's go back through it. Peter's failure. Peter's failure. Verse 12. So before James and some Jews came down from Jerusalem to visit, Peter had been excited about eating meals with them and taking the Lord's Supper with them and visiting with them and fellowshiping with them and sitting with them.

But when the Jews, the guys came down from Jerusalem, he got scared. He was worried more about what they thought than what God thought. And it says fearing them there were other circumstances.

He don't think they're going to beat him up. That's not what he's fearing. But he's like, I don't want them to think poorly of me. I don't want them to think I'm not obeying the law. I don't want them to think I've gone liberal. And so I'm not going to eat with these Gentiles.

So he feared them. Now, you've got to understand why that's important. We don't even understand it. It's foreign to our culture. So open your Bible to Acts chapter 10 and verse 28.

[9 : 04] The apostle Peter is a great guy. He is a great guy. You should not leave here thinking any less of the apostle Peter. Peter's a great guy. And if you remember the story, how many of you remember the story of Peter and Cornelius?

If you do, shake your head, raise your hand, say amen. Peter and Cornelius. Well, see, Cornelius is a Roman. And Peter is a Jew. And Peter doesn't have anything to do with non-Jewish people.

The Jewish are like a closed religion. It'd be kind of like being Amish. It'd be like, we got our community. We do things our way. We don't mess around with other people. You ain't one of us. You're a foreigner to us.

We don't have anything to do with you. It's kind of like it was. And so one day, old Cornelius, Acts chapter 10, he wants to get saved. He wants to know God. He doesn't even know how to know God. And he's praying.

I mean, he don't even know how he's praying. He's just like, I wish I could know you. Don't even know how to know you. I have no idea how to know you. And the Holy Spirit sends an angel to him and says, you want to know me?

[10 : 04] Send to Joppa to get a guy named Peter. And he can come down here and explain it to you. Now, but Peter wasn't ready to go. There's no way Peter's going to go to some Roman centurion's house.

That's like a high level. It's a guy who has 100 soldiers that work for him. So he's not even a sergeant. He's a lieutenant. Or he's somebody up high enough.

He's got 100 soldiers under him. A whole battalion of men or whatever you call it. He's a centurion. He's got 100 guys. They kill Jesus. They persecute the church.

They'd already killed James. Well, James, these are not popular people. So Peter's at the house, and he's waiting on a supper. And he goes up on the roof.

They got flat roofs, and they got him a hammock up there or something. And he's just chilling, waiting. He's got his recliner going. I don't know if he's got the TV on. And he falls asleep. And while he's up on the roof sleeping, he starts dreaming.

[11 : 01] And in his dream, this great big sheet comes down to him. And in the sheet, there's all these animals that Jews are not supposed to eat. And in his dream, the Lord speaks to him and says, rise and kill and eat.

Eat those sheep. Eat those pigs. Well, that'd be a good deal. Hey, man, eat that bacon. But Peter's like, I don't eat bacon. Well, how about some shrimp? I don't eat shrimp. You know I don't eat that stuff.

And so he says, don't you call what I call clean unclean. Don't you do that. Peter wakes up. A weird dream. Happened three times.

And on the third time, some guys that had come from Cornelius' house rang the doorbell. And when they rang the doorbell, they came upstairs. They said, hey, somebody's here to see you, Peter.

And they want you to go see Cornelius. And Peter gets up and says, that must be what God is dealing with me about. I mean, in my dream, I was trying to, he wanted me to eat that stuff. I don't eat that junk.

[11 : 56] I told him I don't eat that junk. Now I know. I was supposed to go see that Roman. Hmm, okay. So they go to see the Roman. And the Romans get saved.

Gloriously, wonderfully saved, just like anybody else can get saved. And the Holy Spirit comes on them. And Peter's like, wow, I can't believe what's happening here. I don't get it. I don't understand.

I don't see what's happening here. So he tells them this. This helps you understand where we are. Look at Acts chapter 10 and verse 28. He said unto them, you know that's an unlawful thing for a man that's a Jew to keep company or come unto another, one of another nation.

Look at it. You know that as a Jew, I am not supposed to hang around with people that ain't Jews. And you ain't Jews. You're not circumcised. You're wrong color, wrong language, wrong people.

I'm not supposed to hang around with you. This is verse 10, chapter 10. By the way, the argument happened in 15, five more chapters into the story. And he says, but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

[13 : 08] Now get this. So it's a rule. Jews don't eat with non-Jews. And so Peter's really doing something big, bad, and taboo when he goes to Cornelius' house.

He says in that verse, verse 29, he says, therefore came unto you without gainsaid. I didn't even argue with God about it. I just said, okay, I'll go see him. I've learned a lesson. God's told me. Treat everybody alike.

Call no man common, no man unclean. That's back in chapter 10. So when this great big revival happened in Antioch and people are getting saved like crazy, it was like the wildest story you've ever heard.

The people that were getting persecuted back in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 8 and verse 1, they took off running to the end of the world and they showed up in Antioch and they didn't even mean to do so, but one of them slipped up and told a non-Jewish person about Jesus.

What they had done everywhere they go, they run up to people and look at, oh, you're one of mine. I'll talk to you about Jesus. And a couple of them didn't know what they were doing. They slipped up and talked to a guy that wasn't Jewish and said, you're not going to believe this, but God came in human flesh and Jesus was God and he died on the cross and he was buried and he rose again and salvation's free through what he does.

[14 : 26] And these Gentiles went, you kidding me? You mean that God will forgive my sin and save me and give me heaven just by what Jesus did?

And these guys from Jerusalem go, yeah, that's exactly what I'm telling you. And they said, believing. I'm believing right now. And he goes, excuse me, I noticed an accent there.

Are you not Jewish? Uh-oh. Doesn't go any messed up. That guy runs and starts telling all his friends that ever finished a revival going on. And word gets back to Jerusalem.

And back in Jerusalem, Twitter account got the word back. And they were back in Jerusalem. They heard that. They said, wow, what's going on? How can people? They're not Jews. They sent old Barnabas down. And Barnabas goes down and he's the sweetest guy you've ever met on the planet.

He don't care what color you are. He don't care about anything. He just loves people. And he starts witnessing to them and discipling them. He was taking them through John Pearson's foundations. They were already written before the foundation of the earth.

[15 : 23] Amen. That's a joke. And he's taking them through foundations. And he said, I can't get all this done by myself. And so he ran and got a guy named Saul out of Tarsus who will be called Paul. And they go down there working like crazy.

And everybody's hearing about it. It's like a revival taking place. When I was, oh, 23, I started my first church. And there was this guy in Dalton named Wayne Cofield.

And he had started a church one year after I did. And everywhere I went, they talked about this young guy that went to Dalton, had 200 people on his first Sunday. And never dropped below 200.

And I was like, I've got to go see that guy. Because I'm struggling to get to 30. I mean, that's all I heard about. Every fellowship meeting I went to, they'd say, yeah, there's this guy in Dalton, man. He's getting her done.

I'm sitting there going, I guess that means I ain't, huh? And so one Sunday night, I drove all the way up to his church. And I went to the building, it was advertised. And there was nothing there. The sign was down.

[16 : 22] I said, oh, another one bites the dust. And I made a phone call and found out he had a brand new beautiful building. I walked there and I said, kill myself. I can't break 50. And this guy's got her. That's exactly what's going on.

It's that same kind of story. They're over here in Jerusalem. And they're hearing about God doing big stuff. And so Paul and Barnabas are getting a great work done.

And then Peter one day said, man, we'll go down and see what's happening. And he got down there. And when he got there, he's like, I cannot believe this. People are getting saved. Their lives are being changed. This is wonderful. Wonderful.

And so then James came down. And when James came down, he was like, na, na, na, na, na, na, na. And when he did, Peter said, I'm pulling away. And Peter pulls away. And then when Peter pulled away, a bunch of the other Jewish gods that are already there working with him, they started pulling away.

And then Barnabas, the sweetest guy in the world, he pulled away. That's the story of what's going on right here. Look at verse 13. And the other Jews dissembled, stopped assembling, likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation, with their hypocrisy.

[17 : 33] By the way, you've got to understand, Peter knows this is okay. Don't forget, Peter's already gone to the Ethiopians in Acts chapter 8.

Or excuse me, the Samaritans in Acts chapter 8. He's already gone to them and talked to them. He's gone to the Romans in Acts chapter 10. In Acts chapter 15, they've had a big meeting at the big church down in Jerusalem.

And they've all agreed, it doesn't matter what color you are or what language you speak, God loves you and he wants you saved. And we all get saved the same way. It's all been decided. And now Peter's down here with Paul and Barnabas and he gets carried away with it and so does Barnabas and it's a bad thing.

So go with me to verse 11. Chapter 2, verse 11. So when Peter was come to Antioch, Paul says, I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed.

Don't forget who Peter is. He's a leading apostle. He's one of the names the false brothers are using when they come down there. When they came down and started running around the Galatians, they said, you know, Peter, he's the big shot back up in Jerusalem.

[18 : 39] And he says, y'all got to get circumcised. But Peter didn't actually say it, but they said he did. God's used Peter in a big way. He is a great man of God. He knows getting, he knows better than what he's doing.

He's even agreed with Paul's ministry earlier in Acts chapter 15. He came to Antioch and he loved the brothers. And he showed that living, he wasn't going to live according to the law and legalism.

He ate food with them. And he didn't try to shove the law on them at first. But now he seems to be trying to push it on them. Verse 14, look at it. When I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if you're a Jew and you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, why are you telling the Gentiles to live like a Jew?

He even includes himself. He said, we who are Jews by nature, verse 15, and not sinners of the Gentiles, we know the truth. We know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Even as we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, not by works of law, but by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

[19 : 54] Now, won't you take your Bible with me? And I want you to mark a couple of things, if you would, in this passage of Scripture. I want you to mark the word knowing in verse 16. Knowing. What do they know?

They actively knew something. They had learned something that accepted the truth. And what was that truth? That a man is not justified by the works of the law. Nobody gets right with God by getting baptized.

Nobody gets right with God by speaking in tongues. Nobody gets right with God by obeying the Sabbath day laws. Nobody gets right with God by getting circumcised. We know that. It's a given. Then I want you to notice the words not and for.

Again, look at verse 16. Not justified by the works of the law. Second time, verse 16. Not by the works of the law. Verse 16.

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Repeatedly, the Holy Spirit is saying, you don't get saved by what you do.

[20 : 51] Now, listen to me. I want you to listen to me. You have sinned against the Holy God if you're not saved yet. And you are on your way to hell and you deserve it. But he loves you.

And he does not want you turning over a new leaf. He does not want you writing some New Year's resolutions. He doesn't want you to quit smoking, cussing, drinking, dancing, and going with them to do. He wants you to trust Jesus who died on a cross for you.

He wants you to quit trusting in water baptism. He wants you to quit trusting in church attendance. He wants you to quit trusting in how much money you give. He saves you because he's a good God.

He saves you because he's a good God. He doesn't save you because you're good. There's a word being used in the passage, and I want to study that the rest of the time we have here. So look at the word justified.

It's been mentioned several times. Justified. Thinking through justification. Verse 16. Look what it says. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even as we have believed in Jesus that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

[22 : 04] Three times. Justified. Justified. Justified. Now you've got to understand, that's a big question. It's probably not that big a deal to you today because you're not dying.

But some family members are sitting beside the bed of loved ones right now that will soon be dead. And everybody, sooner or later, wonders what I've got to do to be right with God.

What I've got to do to be ready for death. What I've got to do to be right with God when I die. That question was asked in Job chapter 9 and verse 2.

Job chapter 9 and verse 2. I know it. I know it is so of a truth. But how should a man be just with God? How could a man settle accounts with God?

How could a man get things right with God? How could a man get to the place where everything's okay with God? That's what Job said. How should a man be just with God?

[23 : 06] They knew about this in the Old Testament. This is not a New Testament word. It's an Old Testament word. And Habakkuk, how you say it in English? Yeah, Habakkuk chapter 2 and verse 4.

The Bible says, Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by faith. The just shall live by his faith.

And the word just is a word that's used for us. If you're a born-again person, you are the just. You're the just. You're the right ones. You're the ones that are right with God.

Things are settled with God. When everything is settled with God, you're the just. And the just shall live by his faith. So what is justification? Here's the definition.

I'm going to read it to you like three times. I really wish you'd write it down. Write it in the margin of your Bible there by Galatians if you want. The word justification as used in the Bible is this. The act, justification is the act of God declaring the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ.

[24 : 10] Justification is the act of God declaring the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ. One more time.

Justification is the act of God declaring the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ. So this is an important thing here.

Let's read some verses. Okay? Justification. It's the act where God goes, you're okay. Things are settled. You're right. I declare it.

I declare that you are right. You have trusted me. And I declare you're right in Jesus Christ. Romans chapter 5 verse 1. Romans chapter 5 verse 1.

Write these down somewhere. Romans chapter 5 verse 1. Therefore, being justified by faith. Therefore, being justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[25 : 09] Could you read this verse with me out loud? Would you read that with me? Are you ready? The Bible says, therefore, being justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God angry with you? We have peace. You say, I think God's up there mad. No, no, no, no. We got peace. Okay? Look at the verse. Therefore, being justified by faith.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what reconciliation is. That's a whole other one. But the whole deal is there was a time when our sins were over.

And the Bible said in John 3, 36, the wrath of God was over us. Huh? But not now. We have peace. Because we are justified by faith.

Okay? Let's read another verse if I could get you to do so. Go to Romans 8, 33. By the way, it's a one-time act. You need to write that down. It's a one-time act.

[26 : 04] I have declared. Okay? I have declared quite a few couples married here at our church. I mean, they didn't always get married in this room.

But there's probably somebody. Is there anybody in the room that I've ever married or has all been missed here? Anybody in this room that I participated in your wedding? All right. Sam and. Okay. Look at Jeff and Mindy. That was 100 years ago. And Sam and Tammy.

Okay. You know what happened? We got through the wedding. We go through it all. They've done the promises and they've done their vows and they've finished all of it. And I say, it is my privilege to now declare you husband and wife by the authority given to me by God as a minister of his word.

And I say that all the time. By the way, y'all aren't married unless I declare it again. Let me declare it again. You'd be like, that's dumb. You already declared it once. Yeah? That's what he said.

I will declare you just. That's what this amounts to. So it's not a process. You're not being justified in something slow happening. But rather, we are justified.

[27 : 06] By faith, we have peace. No one here is more justified than another. You can't look around going, yep, I can tell that was a little more justified.

Ty, you don't look all that justified today. That's not what's going on. We're justified. That's like saying, which one of us is married the most? You got declared married. You're married. You might have come in here fighting, but you're still married.

Amen. Some of you still look like you've been sucking on persimmons and you're still not happy, but you're still married. Sorry. It was declared and it's happened. You don't justify yourself, but God justifies you.

You don't justify yourself, but God justifies you. Look at Romans 8, 33 right behind me. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies.

Could you read that last part with me? It is God that justifies you. You understand what it means when it says, lay to the charge of God's elect? It means like the devil walks up like an accuser and says, all right, Becker, you're a sinner, and I'm telling God on you.

[28 : 08] And Becker goes, it's okay. Tell him. It was God that justified me. So go tell him. So he runs over and says, hey, God, Becker's a sinner.

And God said, no, he ain't. I declared him justified. You understand that? You're a sinner. God, he's a sinner. God says, I don't know how you say that to me. He's one of mine.

I declared him just, and you ain't got no voice in my court. Out of here. Amen. Romans 8, 33. Go with me, if you would, to Romans 3 and verse 20. The law shows us our sin, but does not redeem us.

The law is to show you your sin, but it's not to redeem you. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall, read that with me.

It's right behind me. Look up here if you don't have it open in your Bible. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall what? No flesh be justified where? In his sight, in God's sight.

[29 : 08] For by the law is the knowledge of sin. There's one of our folks in the room right now who just found out he has cancer. And he's going to go to the doctor this week and have some more tests run.

That's what the tests have shown he's got that. And so, Lord willing, they're going to go now and they're going to fix it. You get it? The law says, I see something wrong. And grace says, and I can fix it.

The law says, I see something wrong. Let's just talk you over. How many of you have ever told a lie? Raise your hand. Liars. How many of you ever wanted something somebody else had?

Raise your hand. Covetous. How many of you ever looked at a girl and thought something you shouldn't have thought? Raise your hand, man. Bunch of liars. Go ahead. You bunch of women, you ever thought something about another guy's, another girl's husband?

Don't raise your hand. I know you lie right here in church. I've already proven that. And so he looks at you and says, bunch of lying, covetous, adulterers. How many of you ever wished one of your teachers was dead when he was in school?

[30 : 12] Hold your hand. I've actually prayed for it. Say amen. I mean, I've been sitting there saying, God in heaven, hear my prayer. Drop her dead in her tracks. He looked down and said, you're a dang mad boy. The law tells me I'm a sinner.

But that's the knowledge of sin. But you know what happened to us? 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21. Get it. I mean, I know we go to this verse all the time, but it's so beautiful.

Same thing's found in Isaiah chapter 53. Look at this. It says, for he hath made him to be sin for us.

See, what happened on Calvary was God packed up your sin and my sin, and he placed our sin on Jesus, and Jesus became sin. That's what the Bible verse says.

That we might be made, would you say this out loud with me? That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. You are looking at the righteousness of God in Christ right now, and I'm him too.

[31 : 19] You say, how'd that happen? You ain't all that righteous. I know. But he declared me so. I know. But he declared me so. That's what the Bible says.

You can go home today saying, I'm righteous. Now, me and my wife have been known to have a few fights. I know none of y'all ever have. But on the day we've had our worst fight, we're still married. That was declared. The only way I could be unmarried is somebody had to declare that.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 21. We are declared righteous, not made righteous. It's not like the day you get saved, all of a sudden you go, boom.

I'm perfect. I'm righteous now. No more lying, cussing, drinking, dancing, going into it. I mean, I ain't never going to mess up again. I've been made righteous. No, you've been declared righteous.

Now, I mean, we want to live it out. We want it to become a reality. But the day I got saved, I was declared righteous. And to be blunt honest, I'll make a confession to you.

[32 : 19] I have sinned more since I got saved than I did before. I got saved when I was almost eight. I mean, I've messed up far more since then. But I've been righteous the whole time by the grace of God. By the grace of God.

I want you to write this down somewhere. Justification is more than forgiveness. It's more than forgiveness. Because forgiven would allow you to go out and sin and become guilty again.

You could be forgiven and go out there and do it again and be guilty again. But once you're justified by faith, you can never be found guilty again.

Because he declared you righteous. So it can't be undone. This is more than being forgiven. It's not like God forgave us. Praise the Lord. God forgave us.

Yes, he did. But he did more than that. He justified us. He said, you are righteous. And I declared Jeff and Mindy married.

[33 : 23] I don't know, good night, 18 years ago or whatever. 17 years ago. I don't know how long they've been married. But when I declared them married, that doesn't mean they've always lived like they should have in their marriage. I'll just be honest with you.

Because Mindy's not always been such a good girl. Jeff's not in here, so I'll pick on Mindy. Amen. You know, I'm joking. But see, they have had their little arguments and discussions. They have had their little fusses.

But they've been married as long as they've been married. Amen. I married Trent in 72, didn't I? Wasn't I there? I was part of it. Your daddy did the big stuff. He probably did the declaring. I just did the praying or something.

I ain't sure my prayer worked on that one. But anyway. Justification is more than a pardon. Write this down now. Justification is more than a pardon.

You see, when you pardon a criminal, he still has a record. You haven't got a record. You don't have a record.

[34 : 19] It's not like you're walking around and some people go, there goes a guy that's a murderer. He was pardoned, but he's a murderer. No, we walk around and say, there goes the just. There goes the saint. There goes the man of God.

We don't have a record anymore. Look at, I know, you don't believe me. You're like, nah. You believe the Bible? If you do, say amen. Psalm 32, 1.

Psalm 32, 1. The Bible said, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.

Now, I need you to look that verse up. And if you don't look it up, at least write this down so you look at it later. Imputed means doesn't count. Or imputed means count. Put on your account.

Okay, it's like, it's an accounting term. And he said, it says in, did I say the verse wrong? Psalm chapter 32, verse 2. It says, imputeth not iniquity.

[35 : 20] Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. You know what that means? God never goes. There's Sam right there.

There's Sam lying again. No, he don't. He doesn't impute it to us. He doesn't count it to us. He doesn't write it on our account. Did you hear that? Huh?

Okay, you didn't get it yet. I'll give you another verse. Transgression is forgiven. Sin is covered. It's no longer on the record. God doesn't write any more new stuff on there. I need you to go with me to Romans chapter 4, verse 1.

So you get it in the New Testament. Because you was probably thinking, that's Old Testament. It's all one book. Romans chapter 4, verse 1. Look at what he said. What shall we say then, that Abraham our father, Old Testament, is pretending to the flesh is found?

For if Abraham were justified by works, he'd have something to brag about. But not before God. For what says the scripture? Now, you've got to get this. I need you to mark it.

[36 : 21] Abraham believed God. And it was, say the word, it was counted unto him for righteousness. Here's what happened. Book's open.

Abraham, you believe me? You do? Okay. Here it is. I'm writing this down. Abraham is righteous. You say, well, did he get circumcised? He will later, but he hasn't yet.

Did he give a big offering? Did he get baptized? Did he come to church faithful? What did he do? Read the verse. Can you read it with me? Abraham what?

Come on. I need to hear that word strongly. Abraham what? Believed God, and it was counted. That means he didn't. He wasn't righteous. He was called righteous.

Read on. Verse 4. Now to him that worketh is the reward, not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that. Read the verse. Read verse 5. But to him that. I need to hear that out loud.

[37 : 21] Come on. Him that worketh not. I need you people to come to church faithfully. If you don't come to church faithfully, you're not saved. And if you don't get baptized and circumcised, and I need you giving at least 10%.

In fact, we're going to get the IRS to give us your tax records. Because you got it. You got it. That's not what it says. That's not what it says. Can you read it with me?

But to him that. That don't make sense. Every church you've ever been to told you all you needed to do. But the Bible said him that. What? Worketh not.

Is the reward not reckoned of. Excuse me. Where am I? Verse 5. To him that worketh not, but believeth. Say that word with me. But what does he do? Believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.

His faith is counted for righteousness. Verse 6. Look at it.

[38 : 24] God counts it righteous when you don't do anything. Did you hear that? God counts it righteous without your works.

I'll rub the belly of the Buddha. I'll kiss the cow. I'll get baptized. I'll be at every church service. I'll never miss. And he says, you don't understand this.

God saved you out of God being good. Amen. Imputeth righteous without works. Look at verse 8 with me. There's that word, by the way, imputeth. Verse 8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not.

He will not. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not. Becker, you messed up. I'm going to tell God to write that on your account. Hey, God. Becker messed up. You need to write that down.

God said, I ain't writing that on his account. He's declared righteous. Say amen. Last thing. Time to quit. Romans 4, 5. Guess who God justifies?

[39 : 28] Read the second part of that verse. But believeth on him that justifies the... Whoa, whoa, whoa. Who does he justify? Then God.

And we're all sitting here saying, I took a bath this morning. I put on deodorant. I put on aftershave. I comb my hair. I brush my teeth. I've been circumcised. I don't smoke, chew, dance.

Go with them that do. I mean, I'm a good guy. God, I need to be justified. He said, I don't justify the guys that got cleaned up. I justify the... I justify the... Ungodly.

The ungodly. The ungodly. The ungodly. You came here this morning thinking, how are you going to hang out with search people, man? They're all really good people.

No, they're really not. You see, God only saves the ungodly. And all we are is ungodlies that he saved and made godly by declaring it so.

[40 : 25] Last part of that verse, I wish you'd read it with me. It says, his faith is... Help me. Come on. His faith is... Counted for... So, what did I have to do to be counted for righteousness?

I had to believe. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. We are saved fully and completely by grace through faith.

There have always been and will always be people who want us to go back under the law. To do things and work to be saved. But anytime you add anything to faith, it's not faith anymore.

Becker, since I picked on you, I would like to give you the sink pen. I mean, some of the students gave it to me.

It's a pretty nice sink pen. You can have it. \$10. It'll give me \$10. I want to give it. It's a gift. Give me \$10. Now, is it a gift? No, I'm just selling it for \$10. You ever notice, they always call you up and say, we want to give you this for \$35 a month.

[41 : 31] I'm like, you ain't giving me diddly. Amen? If you want to give it to me, I'll take it. I love it. Some of them will call up and say, we're going to give you this free program for three months.

But we need your credit card now. I know what you're doing. You just want to make sure what I forget. You get to charge me and make up for all that you gave me. That wasn't giving. That was a trick. That's not how God works.

His faith is counted for righteousness. We're saved because God justifies sinners, the ungodly.

It's never been about what we do that gets us saved. We simply believe and receive a gift. If you're here this morning and you're not born again and you're not going to go to heaven when you die and you've thought to yourself, I can't be one in church people.

They're weird. I agree. I is one, but they are. And you've come to church and you've thought, well, I mean, I ain't quitting this.

[42 : 32] I ain't quitting that. I don't like all these rules. Man, you go to that Baptist church, man, they got rules about everything. That's what you think. But here's what Paul told them. He'll save you.

He'll save you. And it's not about what you do. Paul didn't send workers out soul winning with a knife. Knock on the door. Say, hey, would you like to believe today and be a Christian?

You would? Good. We got a knife here. We're going to circumcise you. That's not what he did. That's not what he did. Salvation is by grace. So you're here. And you've never believed God, but you've still got all that sin.

And you've still got all that guilt. And you're still going to die and go to hell. And you're not right with God. But you can be today. Through what Jesus did, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you're a Christian that's been playing with too many rules and acting like salvation has anything to do, then do what you read Galatians 2. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

[43 : 40] For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.