

Galatians

Lesson 4

Chapter 2:11-21

Leader Guide

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David R. Steele

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Lesson 4
Justified by Faith
Galatians 2:11-21

So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. *Galatians 2:16*

Prayers

Introduction

Read Galatians 2:11-21

Gal 2:11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.

Gal 2:12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

Gal 2:13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Gal 2:14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

Gal 2:15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners'

Gal 2:16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Gal 2:17 "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!

Gal 2:18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.

Gal 2:19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

1. What made Peter revert to Jewish legalism after boldly proclaiming God's grace at the Council of Jerusalem?

Peter was influenced by Judaizers, who were Pharisees who became believers (Acts 15:5).

2. Who is James referred to in verse 2:12?

James was the brother of Christ who became a leader of the Jerusalem church. He wrote the gospel letter of James.

3. There is no other record in scripture of Paul confronting Peter's legalism in Antioch. Peter continued to live according to Jewish regulations after Christ's resurrection but fully understood salvation by grace through Christ, apart from the law, at the Council of Jerusalem. How did God confront Peter's legalism?

Ac 11:1 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

Ac 11:2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him

Ac 11:3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

Ac 11:4 Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:

Ac 11:5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was.

Ac 11:6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air.

Ac 11:7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

Ac 11:8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

Ac 11:9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

Ac 11:10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

Ac 11:11 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying.

Ac 11:12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.

Ac 11:13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter.

Ac 11:14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

Ac 11:15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.

Ac 11:16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Ac 11:17 So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

Ac 11:18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

- a. Verse 5 **Through a vision**
- b. Verse 7 **Through a voice**
- c. Verse 10 **Through repetition**
- d. Verse 12 **Through the Holy Spirit**
- e. Verse 13 **Through an angel sent to Cornelius**

- f. Verse 15 **By sending his Spirit on the Gentiles and they spoke in tongues like the Jews from all nations at Pentecost.**
 - g. Verse 16 **Peter remembered the of Christ**
 - h. Verse 17 **God showed his love for Gentiles and Jews equally.**
4. Before we judge Peter too harshly, have you ever struggled with an old behavior you knew you needed to change? Old behaviors are difficult to change, but God does confront us as he did Peter. How does God confront your sin and offer his forgiveness and grace?

Old behaviors are difficult to change, and we continue to sin even though we are free from its bondage and its eternal consequences with faith in Christ. God confronts our sins in various ways. Sometimes we suffer its consequences; relationships are broken, or we experience the loss of respect of others when our sin is exposed. The Holy Scriptures and Holy Spirit convict us and bring us to repentance but also assures us of our forgiveness so that we do not need to carry the burden of guilt. Christ, in his infinite grace, gave us his sacrament of communion so that we could have union with him and another means of the assurance of the complete forgiveness of our sins. In our church, we have communion every other Sunday. My only regret is that we do not have it every week since I sin daily against God and my neighbor in my thoughts, actions, and the actions I fail to take.

5. Paul's first reference to justification is in verse 2:16. He will return to the topic four more times in Galatians. We usually think of our need to justify our actions when we explain our actions for something that has gone wrong. In a religious sense, we must be justified to God for our sins. The problem is that we can never justify our sins to God or live without sinning. The only way we are justified to God is through our faith in Christ's sacrifice for us and through union with the Holy Spirit so that Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness. What are other ways we try to justify ourselves to God without Christ?

Without understanding justification through Christ's death for our sins, we look to our own actions to justify ourselves. We might try to live strict moral lives, strive to do good works for others, or give large gifts to the church or charity in an effort to please God. All these actions are meaningless without faith or love for Christ. God never intended us to carry the burden of guilt for our sins; that is why through his grace, he gave us faith in Christ's sacrifice for our sins, assurance of forgiveness, and His Spirit as our guide and comforter.

6. Is it possible to seek Christ and not discover that we are sinners, verse 17?

It is doubtful we will see our need for a Savior if we do not see ourselves as sinners. Or, we think our sins are not really bad, and God will overlook or forgive them. God's forgiveness is through Christ's sacrifice, so there is no forgiveness or justification without faith in Christ.

7. How does the law bring the death Paul refers to in verse 19? Refer also to the following verses:

- a. Gal 2:19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.
- b. Ro 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.
- c. Ro 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned
- d. Eph 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins

Paul is referring to spiritual death. We become conscious of our sins and spiritual separation from God through the law.

8. In Galatians 2:20, Paul says he was crucified with Christ and no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. We are joined with Christ's death and resurrection. Read the following passages and discuss how God accomplishes these acts and their many benefits.

Ro 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Ro 6:5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Ro 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Col 2:11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Col 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

Jn 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of **water and the Spirit**. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

- a. How are joined with Christ's death?

We are joined with Christ's death through baptism because we receive his Holy Spirit and a new life through baptism. Since we have a new life, the old life has passed away.

b. What is the benefit of being joined with Christ's death through baptism?

We are rescued from spiritual death and receive a new life in Christ through the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins and the power to overcome evil. We are given the assurance of eternal life and God's guidance in the present.

c. How are we commanded to live in our new life of being joined with Christ?

Ro 6:10 The death he [Christ] died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Ro 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Ro 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Ro 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Gal 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

We should love others in our new life in Christ, praise God, and worship Christ for our new lives.

d. What assurance does God give us when we sin?

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1Jn 1:10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1Jn 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense —Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Even though we are not to sin, we still commit sins in our thoughts, words and actions. We should confess our sins to God, repent, and leave our guilt at the cross to live lives of joy and thanksgiving.

e. Why did Christ need to only die once for all sins?

Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

Heb 9:25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.

Heb 9:26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 9:27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Heb 9:28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. ^m

The writer of Hebrews compared the blood offering in the Old Covenant of Moses and the New Covenant in Christ to explain clearly why Jesus' sacrificial death only needed to happen once, for all sin, for all time. In the Old Covenant, sacrifices for sin were made daily and once a year the high priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle to offer the blood of a sacrifice for the sins of the people. But Christ was perfect, and his sacrifice was perfect, and after his sacrifice, he entered heaven to be a mediator and intercede on our behalf.

9. What is Paul's ultimate proof in verses 20-21 that we can never be righteous enough to justify ourselves to God?

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

If it were possible to live a righteous life, apart from faith, Christ would not have to live as a man and become God's perfect sacrifice for our sins.

10. How does the doctrine of justification (salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ) give you total assurance of your salvation?

I have total assurance of my salvation through faith in Christ. God gave me the gift of faith, I am united with Christ through faith and baptism, and he is my righteousness, my justification.

Closing Prayer