

# JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW?

By Mike Taylor



**23** "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

**24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

**25** But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

**26** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:23-26)

**21** "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain". (Galatians 2:21)

We have a discussion going on a Christian website kicking back and forth the question "Are works of the law required for salvation?" We have one young man who tries to use scripture ( out of context) to prove the point that we are required to keep the Law. He is right? Do we HAVE to keep the law in order for salvation to be found in us? Let us go to what Paul wrote concerning what was going on in his time.

## GRACE AND LAW

The Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians to address a heresy that put him into direct confrontation with the Apostle Peter. Let us give an historical background of this differences between two of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus.

Paul describes his recent trip to Jerusalem in which he was accompanied by Titus. Titus was not a converted Jew, but rather a converted (and uncircumcised) Greek, which had created quite a stir among Jerusalem's Messianic community. Those whom Paul addressed as "false brethren unawares" were 'brought in' as spies, hoping to "spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." (Galatians 2:4)

Paul was offended that his fellow brother was being isolated by the Jewish Church, and he blamed Peter for his obvious hypocrisy to allow it.

**11** "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

**12**For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

**13**And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

**14**But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

**15**We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

**16**Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, 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." (Galatian 2:12-16)

Peter whose hypocrisy was called out by Paul, was afraid of offending the Jewish Authorities and allied himself with "Judaizers", who believe faith came through grace, but also demanded the keeping of the Law of Moses.

Here Paul reminded Peter that the wall of partitions had been torn down that separated Jews from Gentiles. When the Jewish brethren from Jerusalem were not around, Peter ate with the Gentiles to prove his belief in that belief.

**14** "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;  
**15** Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;  
**16** And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"  
(Ephesians 2:14-16)

**8** " For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:  
**9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.  
**10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them". (Ephesians 2:8-10)

But when certain Jews came as emissaries from the Apostle James, Peter withdrew from the Gentiles, acting as if the law was still in force and the distinctions between Jew and Gentile should be maintained.

**12** "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.  
**13** And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." Galatians 2:12-13)

Paul called this doctrine "dissembling". "Dissembling", according to the dictionary, means to "disguise or conceal one's true nature, motives or feelings behind a false appearance."

Paul's main complaint had little to do with the specific subject at hand. He accused Peter of subverting the Gospel, and replacing it with legal requirements that amounted to keeping the Law, but claiming salvation by faith.

Paul spoke the plain truth of the Gospel noted above:

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, 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." (Galatians 2:16) Even shedding more light onto law vs. grace:

**5**Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)  
**6**And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

**7**That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:5-7)

## **HOW DOES THAT APPLY TO US TODAY?**

Let's stay with that statement for a minute. "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ."

If it was true in Paul's day, then it is equally true for us today. God has not changed in the last 2000 years, and neither have we. It's just as active today of the heresy of works to produce salvation as it was then. "16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, 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." (Galatians 2:16)

Note that Paul says a man is justified by "the faith OF Jesus Christ." Christians place their faith, first and foremost in the fact that Jesus Christ will keep His promises. Our faith is in His faithfulness. Understand that many believe

in the past historical figures, such as Abraham Lincoln, or as George Washington in our culture. Those who believe history, know that Jesus was an historical person, but one can believe Jesus existed and not be a Christian. The Muslims believe that He existed, but Islam is hardly a believer by faith in Jesus Christ and are not part of the Christian experience.

Christians are justified by “faith of Jesus Christ” to keep His promises when He said in John:

**37** “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

**38** For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

**39** And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” (John 6:37-39)

Many in the Church today impose certain legal requirements as being contingent on salvation, just as did the early Church. They make all kinds of rules to address how you should dress, or the place of women in church services, or how you should wear your hair. But when you speak of many who profess “law keeping” as much of the Sabbath Keeping denominations do, then it is easy to elevate even the Sabbath high and lifted up as an object of worship and the laws that surround the Old Testament covenants with Israel as coming close to idolatry...they worship the creation and not the Creator. Now that is not to say that the Law and the Sabbath are done away with, not at all. They are good and Holy and are appropriate for the person who follows Jesus Christ. But you must make it plain in your own Christian life, that Jesus is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” “**6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.’ (John 14:6)

But is the Law sin? God forbid!!

**6** “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and noting the oldness of the letter.

**7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Roman 7:6-7)

The Law has been our school master of our need for a Savior. There is no man that can keep the law, not long as he is mortal. Paul laments this in the same chapter of Romans 7:

**14** “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

**15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

**16** If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

**17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:14-17)

So from this, it is evident that we can't keep the Law...even after we accept Jesus as personal Savior. Paul writes of even his inability to keep the whole of the Law, in it's spiritual intent as preached by Jesus on the “Sermon on the Mount”. But that doesn't stop some of these denominations from taking scripture out of context to prove the need to keep the Law. They claim salvation plus Law keeping is the combination for eternal life. But let us take a look at some of these restrictions that they impose on their members for Law keeping.

1. Smoking-those that continue to smoke are not really saved or they would overcome this nasty habit.
2. Those that drink, even a beer are not really saved, because “drunkards will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven”.
3. What if the person is hooked on a prescription drug, are they saved? Not according to law keeping beliefs.

These few sinful behaviors disqualifies some from salvation because they are supposed to be free from bondage and not fill the Temple of God with things that defile. They are accused of having only a head knowledge, not a heart knowledge. I can't speak for anybody else but me, but my head knowledge tells me I'm still a sinner, and in need of a Savior...my heart tells me that I'm not as bad as that other Joe Blow that does all these things, because my “secret sins” are more socially acceptable.

The point is, being a Christian does not disqualify me from never sinning again. So I put my trust in Jesus to save me from even these more “socially acceptable” sins that none of us, if we be honest with ourselves, can fully escape. Because sin is sin, any sin and we can't escape. At least while we are alive in this body of flesh, we can't.

So we put our trust in Jesus Christ, as we can't trust our flesh to remain sin free.

Trust is defined as "putting our faith in something committed into the care of another's charge. To have or place confidence in; depend on."

If smoking and drinking and drugs are evidence that a person is not really a Christian, then what about obesity? Being fat in today's culture is not seen as sinful, despite the proven health risks associated with being overweight.

How is that less defiling of the temple of the Holy Spirit than the other, less socially-acceptable examples of self-indulgence? Logic and Scripture both demand the recognition that lustful self-indulgence would be the relevant sin, not the object one lustfully self-indulges oneself with.

I am not making a case that it is acceptable for Christians to smoke, drink, use drugs, or indulge in riotous living. I am simply using extreme examples. Sin is sin.

You can substitute swearing, cheating on your taxes, lying about your age, wishing evil on some guy who just cut you off in traffic, or envying your neighbor's new car.

(The more socially-acceptable 'substitute list' above breaks five of the Ten Commandments.) I'm not making a case to say as a Christian I'm free to live the devil.

I am making the case that our salvation is not contingent on our works. Every Christian is a work in progress, the Scriptures tell us.

**6** "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

**7** Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." (Philippians 1:6-7)

Personally, I can attest to this Scripture and so can you if you be honest with yourself. I am not the same man I was 20 years ago...or even when I first got saved 50+ years ago. Each of us have gone through transformations over a number of years. I would hate to have been judged for the man I was even 20 years ago. Why? Because I'm a work in progress...YOU are a work in progress, because God is not done with any of us, till He calls us home or we are changed into spiritual beings at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for His Bride at the Rapture. I doubt He is done with me yet, or with you. There are more changes to be made according to His will.

(And the same applies to you. No matter where you are in your walk with the Lord, right now, it will only get better.)

**28** "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

**29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

**30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified". (Romans 8:28-30)

I started this message with the scriptures noted above "I do not frustrate (or work against) the grace of God." Pardon for sin comes by and through the grace of God, not our own inherent goodness. Paul goes on to make his point in the difference between Law and Grace through Jesus Christ:

**19** "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

**20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

**21** I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:19-21)

Historically speaking, the law pre-existed the First Advent by a thousand years. If the law had been sufficient, then Jesus went to the cross for nothing. I say all this before to say this:

Salvation is immediate and eternal, but our sanctification in this life is a PROCESS. No matter where you are in your walk right now, that process is still underway. Being saved DOES NOT take away your sin nature...you are still mortal having been sold under sin. The grace of Jesus gives you the courage that when you fail, when you sin no matter how small it may seem in this world's eyes, it gives you the courage to keep getting back up when sin knocks you to the ground.

**7** “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

**8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:7-9)

### **CART BEFORE THE HORSE**

I spoke of this young man on that Christian Forum, who in good conscience..but deceived conscience, believes we have to have works to be saved. He quotes the Apostle James speaking of faith without works is dead.

**17** “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

**18** Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

**19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.  
.” (James 2:17-19)

As a plum tree cannot help but produce plums, we as the Children of God, if we follow after our Lord Jesus and believe that we are being transformed into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ..(Romans 8:29) we cannot help but produce good works. It may take one person longer than another. They may not produce on the same level as that other Christian, as God gives us each according to our abilities but there will be fruits. It's almost like we can't help it. But the point is, salvation produces fruit and not the fruit, (our works) produces salvation. Many who believe such will be sorely deceived and found not amongst those who are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Those that sit on the fence, or just can't make that commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, or think erroneously that the Law will save them, or their church, or confession to your priest...or tithing to the Church, or any other Church going activities and have not Jesus, the True Jesus in your heart, receiving Him by faith.

**27** “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

**29** Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

**30** Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

**31** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” (Romans 3:27-31)

Note that last part, we establish the Law!!....they go hand in hand....not one before other...salvation through faith and keeping God's Commandments., not the other way around....John proclaims this truth:

**3** “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

**4** For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:3-4)

We are all striving to do our best for the Lord who saved us. We get knocked down, and some get afraid that the world will persecute us for our stand for Christ and produce not much for the Kingdom of God...But works are for rewards, not salvation...When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ...it will be a rewards banquet to give those things done in our body...those that are for Christ will stand, the rest will be burned up. Paul wrote this truth:

**10** “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

**11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

**13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

**14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

**15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:10-15)

The person who suffered loss will be there, saved as through the fire. Only thing they had was mercy and grace applied to their lives through the blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Their reward will be eternal life, but they lost out on eternal rewards as a King over a portion of the inheritance that belongs to Jesus Christ...or a Priest to guide others to salvation through Christ in the Millennial Kingdom. The first is good, we want eternal life, but the last makes it even better to be in God's service and be given responsibilities to further His Kingdom, all to His glory.

**16** "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

**17** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

**18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:16-18)

So, when life knocks you down because of your sinful nature and you mess up...and folks, each of us do...then get back up and get back in the battle on the front lines. God will reward you for your service to Him. Because we are justified by grace, not the Law.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in HIM, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God sent not His Son, to condemn the world, but that the world through HIM might be saved." (John 3:16-17)

This is Pastor Mike Taylor praying that grace will be found in your life, and the mercy of God to save you for all eternity...If you need prayer, counseling, or just a listening ear, send me an email to [realteam1999@sbcglobal.net](mailto:realteam1999@sbcglobal.net), God bless you all

**TILL WE MEET AT JESUS FEET**