

Justification Defended

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 November 2023

Preacher: Lee Roberts

[0 : 00] The last time we met on a Wednesday night, we saw the unity of the apostles get tested.

! Paul had to confront Peter for bowing to peer pressure.! When the Judaizers came to town, Peter wrongly distanced himself from the Gentile Christians. Although Galatians omits the outcome of that confrontation, we know from other parts of Scripture that Peter accepted the rebuke and repented of his poor behavior.

Galatians chapter 2 verses 15 and 16 were part of Paul's speech to Peter when Paul delivered the rebuke. So let's read Galatians 2, 15 and 16 again.

They set up what we'll study tonight. Paul told Peter in those verses, The truth of the gospel is the good news that we sinners guilty and under the judgment of God may be pardoned and accepted by his sheer grace, his free and unmerited favor, on the ground of his son's death and not for any works or merits of our own.

More briefly, the truth of the gospel is the doctrine of justification, which means acceptance before God by grace alone through faith alone. Despite the advantages the Jews had, including being God's chosen people and having the Scripture, Paul reminded Peter that Jews and Gentiles get saved the same way.

[1 : 52] Every Christian, regardless of ethnic background, is justified by faith in Christ alone.

Throughout Scripture, justification refers to God's declaring a sinner to be guiltless on the basis of faith in him.

It's the free and gracious act by which God declares a sinner right with himself, forgiving, pardoning, restoring, and accepting him on the basis of nothing but trust in his son Jesus Christ and Christ's work.

Justification is a legal term that's borrowed from the law courts. It's the exact opposite of condemnation. To condemn is to declare somebody guilty. But justification is a judicial act in which God pardons sinners, considering them righteous because of the righteousness of Christ.

When he justifies a sinner, God declares that as far as he is concerned, that sinner is as righteous as his own son. Despite being biblical, justification by faith alone can be a controversial doctrine today.

The doctrine was even more controversial when Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians. The Judaizers were people who professed to believe in Jesus, but they wanted everybody to follow Moses as well.

[3 : 07] Their position was this. The only way to be justified is by sheer hard work. And they said that the work you have to do is the works of the law. They said you must do everything that the law commands and refrain from doing everything that the law forbids.

Do you see a problem with that? Do we have any people here tonight who want to claim that they've done everything that God's law requires and have avoided doing anything that God's law forbids?

Not hearing too many takers on that one out there. Yolanda is not here. Even for Yolanda, despite the impossibility of doing everything that God requires and doing nothing that God forbids, it's what the Judaizers were incorrectly telling the Galatians that they had to do.

And that is why Paul was working so hard in this letter to remind the Galatians of the truth of the gospel. We just read it, but here it is again. The truth of the gospel is the good news that we sinners, guilty and under the judgment of God, may be pardoned and accepted by his sheer grace, his free and unmerited favor, on the ground of his son's death, and not for any works or merits of our own.

Stated more briefly, the truth of the gospel is the doctrine of justification, which means acceptance by God, by grace alone, through faith alone. In tonight's passage, Paul defends justification by responding to some of the arguments by the Judaizers.

[4 : 44] And throughout those arguments, we'll see that justification by faith in Christ changes people's desires and motivates them to live for the glory of God. That's the main idea.

Justification by faith in Christ changes people's desires and motivates them to live for the glory of God. So as we go through the text tonight, we'll see that Paul addresses both the Judaizers' argument for justification by works and his argument for justification by faith.

Paul then uses basic logic to show the flaw in the Judaizers' position and the truth of his argument. We're going to look at the verses tonight in three sections.

In verses 17 and 18, refute the Judaizers' argument for justification by works. And in these verses, Paul addresses the problem of sin.

So look at just verse 17 first of Galatians chapter 2. Paul said, But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin?

[5 : 52] Certainly not. So as we break down the first part of verse 17, Paul's words will sound blasphemous at times. But keep in mind two things.

First, Paul is pointing out the main problem with the Judaizers' argument that people can be justified by works. And then second, notice the last sentence of the verse.

After he writes a statement that includes what true Christians would consider blasphemy, he follows it with a strong refute. And that refute is translated here in the ESV as certainly not.

It's one of the strongest negatives you could possibly have in the Greek language. The first sentence of the verse starts out innocently enough. Paul is speaking to Jews here when he talks about our endeavor to be justified in Christ.

Those Jews who are good Jews are working hard to do everything that God's law requires and who also are working hard to avoid anything that God's law forbids. And Paul poses a question here.

[6 : 54] He essentially says, just suppose that while we were working so hard to be justified by works, we commit a sin. What happens then? Well, any honest Jew listening would have to admit, like we did earlier, that someone could never do everything that God's law requires and avoid doing anything that God's law forbids.

So just like we do, the honest Jew has a problem if that Jew wants to claim justification by works. The honest Jew cannot be justified by his or her works because those works fall short of God's perfect standard.

That means the Jew would be a sinner no better than any of the Gentiles. And if the Judaizers were correct in their doctrine that believers are saved in part by keeping the ceremonial law of Moses and that those believers continue to be bound by that law to maintain their salvation, then even before the Judaizers arrived in Antioch, Peter, Barnabas, and all the other Jewish believers, including Paul, had fallen back into the category of sinners by having freely eaten and worshipped with the Gentile Christians.

The second part of the first sentence of verse 17 contains the potentially blasphemous part. Look at that full sentence again. Paul says, But if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin?

Paul is pointing out here that Christ himself never followed all the requirements that the Judaizers were trying to impose on people. That means that by the Judaizers definition, Christ would have had to be considered sinful just like anyone else.

[8 : 40] Let's look at a couple of examples where Jesus deviated from the requirements that the Judaizers were trying to impose on the Galatians. The Judaizers wanted the Galatians to return to Jewish dietary restrictions, but Jesus eliminated the need for those restrictions.

Listen to Mark chapter 7 verses 15 through 19. In Mark chapter 7 verses 15 through 19 Jesus is speaking and he said, There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.

And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him since it enters not his heart but his stomach and is expelled?

Thus he declared all foods clean. So that's one way that Jesus' teaching differed from the Judaizers. Here's another way. On many occasions and in many other ways, Jesus had taught that all who belong to him are one with him and therefore one with each other.

Distinctions among people are neither necessary nor appropriate. Listen to part of what Jesus prayed just before he was arrested on the night before his crucifixion.

[10:06] In John 17, verses 20 through 23, Jesus prayed, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you love me.

The Judaizers viewed Gentiles as second-class Christians lesser than the Judaizers unless the Gentiles converted to following the Jewish law.

But if the Judaizers were right, Paul pointed out that Jesus was wrong. If the Judaizers taught the truth, then Jesus had taught a lie and then was a minister of sin.

Keep in mind that the words that Paul recounts here likely are part of the same dialogue we studied last time when Paul rebuked Peter for being a hypocrite because Peter stopped fellowshiping with the Gentiles.

[11:23] Now, Paul was telling Peter that he'd done something even worse than being hypocritical. To be called a hypocrite likely stung enough, but to be called a sinner was unthinkable and to be accused of making Jesus a minister of sin had to be shocking and repulsive to Peter.

Yet the logic of Paul's argument was inescapable. By his actions, Peter had in effect condemned Jesus Christ. He therefore had to forsake his Jewish sympathies or continue to make his Lord a liar. And that same logic applied to anybody advocating the need to follow the Jewish customs. To his own question about whether Jesus was a minister of sin, Paul immediately responded, certainly not.

It must have been painful for him to suggest even hypothetically that Christ could participate in or even promote sin. But what was going on with the Judaizers demanded such drastic logic.

He knew of no other way to bring Peter and the others to their senses. When we take the Judaizers' argument to its conclusion, do you see how absurd it is for anyone to argue that people can only be justified by keeping the Jewish laws and customs?

[12:40] Even with that absurdity, the Judaizers' arguments are still common today. All false religions have a component of works-based salvation. Other religions are based upon what people must do.

Christianity is based upon what Jesus Christ already has done. Paul finishes out this section with Galatians 2.18 and he says, If I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

By using the term we in the previous verses, Paul had graciously identified himself with the compromisers to a certain extent. Now he even more graciously and lovingly softens the blow to his friends by using himself as a hypothetical example.

He says that if anyone, including Paul, tries to rebuild the system of legalism after it's been destroyed by believing and preaching the gospel of God's grace, he proves himself not Christ to be the transgressor.

He proves himself to be the hypocrite and a sinner by abandoning the grace for law. That's the irony of the Judaizers' argument. By insinuating that Jesus could be sinful because Jesus failed to follow all of their requirements, the Judaizers proved themselves to be the sinful ones.

[14:04] After Paul addressed the problem of sin, he moved on to the next section of his argument. And in verses 19 through 20, we see the process of sanctification.

The process of sanctification is your next set. In a one-sentence summary, sanctification means becoming more like Christ.

When we're saved, God never leaves us just like we were before salvation. Instead, God gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us to become more like Christ.

And we'll see in verses 19 and 20 that the process of sanctification bolsters the argument for justification by faith. In these verses, Paul continues to address the Judaizers' arguments.

someone can win an argument in one of two ways. The person can prove that his position is correct, or he can approve that his opponent's position is wrong.

[15:06] And we just saw Paul dismantle the Judaizers' argument for justification by works. In verses 19 and 20, Paul addresses the Judaizers' argument against his justification by faith.

So let's read verses 19 and 20. Paul said, 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 lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul is anticipating some objections here. Jews, although they were in a special relationship with God through the Old Covenant, still had to be saved by grace and not by works.

So that raises a couple of questions. If Jews are saved by grace and not by works, what happens to the importance of obedience? And if law-keeping does not contribute to someone standing with God, why do we bother to keep the law?

[16:16] Doesn't that make the law useless? Paul could anticipate those objections because he would have had the same objections before his conversion, before God revealed the truth to Paul.

Many critics then and now of the doctrine of justification claim that salvation by grace alone encourages people to continue to sin. The Roman Catholic Church is one such critic, and the Roman Catholic Church maintains that the doctrine of justification received by faith alone is illegal fiction.

And illegal fiction is something acted on as a fact in spite of its possible falsity. One example of that is when a couple marries for a legal purpose like immigration, but has no intention of living together in marriage.

That makes the marriage a legal fiction. When Roman Catholic theologians accuse Protestants of practicing legal fiction with the doctrine of justification, they claim that the doctrine of free justification makes a person legally righteous but leaves his character unaffected.

Regardless of what someone says about the person, he remains a wicked sinner, at least in the minds of the Roman Catholics, and the Judaizers felt the same way.

[17:37] So, we hear this same objection from those who teach a man-centered gospel.

They claim that if you claim a full assurance of salvation through justification by faith alone on the basis of God's grace, people will have no motivation to serve God.

And on the surface, that sounds like a good argument. However, that argument falls on its claim that the justification of by grace alone has no effect on a person's character.

A true believer's character never remains the same after salvation because the process of sanctification follows justification. Look at verse 19 again.

Paul said, For through the law, I died to the law so that I might live to God. Giving up trying to obey the law as a means of justification is the beginning of a Christian's journey rather than the end of it.

[18:43] God gives a truly converted Christian a new desire. That new desire is a desire to live worthy of our calling. Although we can never live out that calling perfectly in this life, that desire affects how we live.

The Judaizers wanted people to live a righteous life so that, in the Judaizers' minds, the people could be saved. True believers, on the other hand, want to live a righteous life because they already are saved.

Instead of being the cause of our salvation, righteous behavior is the result of our salvation. The law is a restraint and a guide, but the law is unable to save people from the penalty for sin.

The law cannot deliver from the guilt or the power of sin. Therefore, Paul says that he would be a transgressor of the law if he taught that the law should do something contrary to what God designed it to do.

In verse 19, Paul expands on the use of the law for the unconverted. The law is designed to convict us of sin and to show us our need for Christ.

[19:54] By its commands, it irritates our sinful nature. That means that the law is fine for the purpose it serves, but the law serves a limited purpose.

The law's purpose is to show us our sinfulness and to show us our need for someone to save us from the wrath of God. In his letter to the Romans, Paul expanded on the purpose of the law.

Listen to Romans chapter 7 verses 7 through 12. What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means.

Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin, for I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, You shall not covet. But sin, seizing an opportunity through the

commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness.

For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.

[21 : 03] For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

The law has power only to condemn men to death for their sin, but no power to redeem them from that sin. God's grace extended by faith in Jesus Christ brings death to sin and freedom from sin. Paul now declares that faith in Jesus Christ also brings death to the law and consequently freedom from the law's penalty. That's what Paul is summarizing here in Galatians 2.19 when he says, For through the law I died to the law.

Earlier, we mentioned that when we die to the law, that's the beginning rather than the ending. Dying to the law is the beginning of when believers truly live for God.

Paul also used his letter to the Romans to expand on this topic and we'll go back one chapter and look at Romans chapter 6 verses 1 through 14. Here are Romans 6 1 through 14.

[22 : 17] Paul said, What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it?

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we also will live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again.

Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died to sin once for all but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[23 : 36] Starting then in Romans 6.12 Paul summarizes what being dead to sin and being alive to Christ means for believers' lifestyles. So let's pick it up again in Romans 6.12.

He says let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace. In Galatians 2.19 Paul simply said that he died to the law so that he might live to God.

But Romans 6.12-14 give us deeper instructions about what that means. So listen to just verses 12 and 13 of Romans 6 one more time. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions.

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

[24 : 51] Once again we see there that righteous living comes after salvation rather than before salvation. Think about it this way. If a man is convicted of a capital crime and is put to death the law obviously has no more claim on him.

The man already has paid his debt to society. Even if he were to rise from the dead the man still would be guiltless before the law which would have no claim on his new life.

He's already paid the penalty. The same concept applies to the believer who dies in Christ to rise in a new life. The believer is free forever from any claim of the law on him.

He paid the law's demand when he died in Christ. His physical death is no longer a punishment. It's only a release to glory provided in his union with Christ.

This brings us to Galatians 2.20 one of the most famous verses in Galatians. And in Galatians 2.20 Paul continues to expand on what he said in verse 19.

[26 : 00] Galatians 2.20 says I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul explains that he died to the law because he was crucified with Christ and he says it is no longer I who live. So the old man the old self is dead and he's been crucified with Christ and the new man is the one that lives.

He says I live to God because Christ lives in me. What he's saying is that the life he received by faith he also lives by faith. And the Greek verb behind live is in the perfect tense and that indicates a completed action that has continuing results.

When a believer trusts in Christ for salvation he spiritually participates with the Lord in his crucifixion and he also participates in the Lord's victory over sin and death.

Peter later taught the same concept in 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 through 8. Listen to what Peter said about God in 2 Peter 1 verses 3 through 8.

[27 : 19] He said his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises.

So that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said that Christ lives in us.

Peter said it a little differently. He said that we are partakers of the divine nature. That's why believers' characters are changed after salvation. After salvation we have the power of God living within us we're no longer the same people that we once were.

Do you see how these facts demolish the Judaizers' argument that teaching justification by faith alone will encourage believers to sin? Justification by faith alone does just the opposite of what the Judaizers and false teachers today claim that it will.

[28 : 52] Because we've been saved through none of our own merit and because we have the nature of God living within us believers want to be more like Christ. As we're sanctified we want to become more and more sanctified.

John Stott wrote our justification takes place when we are united by Christ or to Christ by faith and someone who is united to Christ is never the same person again.

Instead he is changed. It is not just his standing before God which is changed it is he himself radically permanently changed. To talk of his going back to the old life and even sinning as he pleases is frankly impossible.

He has become a new creation and has begun a new life. Paul said a similar thing in 2 Corinthians 5.17 he said therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has passed away behold the new has come.

Then John Stott continued by saying once we have been united to Christ in his death our old life is finished. It's ridiculous to suggest that we could ever go back to it.

[30 : 10] Besides we have risen to a new life. In one sense we live this new life through faith in Christ. In another sense it is not we who live it at all but Christ who lives in us and living in us he gives us new desires for holiness for God and for heaven.

It is not that we cannot sin again we can but we do not want to. The whole tenor of our life has changed everything is different now because we ourselves are different.

When you place your faith in Christ and receive his forgiveness and righteousness God looks at you and says I have absolutely no record of anything ever having gone wrong in your life.

And that's why we can praise God for his grace. God who knows everything chooses to keep no record of our sin after we become united with Christ through faith in Christ.

So let that sink in for a bit. God who knows everything chooses to keep no record of our sin after we become united with Christ through faith in Christ. One question for us all to ponder is whether we really understand the significance of that.

[31 : 26] Keep in mind however that justification is not the same thing as sweeping sin under the rug and pretending it never existed. God knows sin exists.

Sin has a penalty but God also knows that that penalty has been paid for the true believer. The record of your sins was put on the cross of God's son and that's why we are accepted before God

through faith in Christ.

We typically reflect on what Christ did in the past on the cross and that's obviously a good thing to do but if we're not careful we can leave it there and start to think Jesus has done this for me so what can I do for him now?

We have to be careful there because Jesus hasn't stopped doing for you. We're not paying Jesus back because he's still paying us and that's because we are indwelt by Christ.

Christ is in us and the Christian life is not so much about you and I living for Christ as much as it is trusting Christ to live for us and through us and in us.

[32 : 32] This is faith. By faith we are accepted before God and by faith we are alive to God because we are attached to Christ. Listen to how one commentary summarized Galatians 2.20.

It said, this text reveals something very surprising about the cross. It shows us that at least four things were nailed to the cross of Calvary.

The most obvious of course was Jesus himself through his hands and feet. As the records plainly show he was put to death by being nailed to the cross.

Also fastened to the cross with a hammer and a nail was the public announcement that read Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. The third thing that was nailed to the cross was the debt of our sin.

Paul explained this to the Colossians in Colossians 2 verses 13 and 14. And here are Colossians 2 13 and 14. And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of death that stood against us with its legal demands.

[33 : 47] This he set aside nailing it to the cross. If you're keeping track we've listed three things that were nailed to the cross but the quote I read earlier said that Galatians 2 20 shows us four things that were nailed to the cross.

So the fourth thing that was nailed to the cross was each of us individually as believers. And that sounds strange when you first hear it so hear me out on this one and we'll work through that statement.

We know that Jesus Christ died once for all. He alone was the God-man so he alone could atone for the sins of the world by offering his life in our place.

Yet the scripture also says that the Christian has been crucified with Christ. It uses the perfect tense to show that this is something that really and truly happened as if we were nailed to the very tree of Calvary ourselves.

If you're a follower of Christ then you were nailed to the cross too. The crucifixion is not just a fact about the life of Christ and a momentous event in human history.

[34 : 54] It is also part of every Christian's personal life story. The Cambridge Puritan William Perkins said we are in mind and meditation to consider Christ crucified and first we are to believe that he was crucified for us.

This being done we must go yet further and as it were spread ourselves on the cross of Christ believing and with all withholding ourselves crucified with him.

Again and again the scripture teaches that the Christian is in Christ. The Christian is united to Christ and the way anyone becomes united to Christ is by faith.

Once we put our faith in Christ then we are in Christ. Our union with Christ becomes a spiritual reality. Here's a quote from Martin Luther. He said by faith you are so cemented to Christ that he and you are as one person which cannot be separated but we remain attached to him forever. Consider the significance of the last part of that quote. By faith you are so cemented to Christ that he and you are as one person which cannot be separated but remains attached to him forever.

[36 : 10] Union with Christ explains why the Christian is dead to the law. We were united to Christ in his crucifixion so as far as God is concerned we were really and truly nailed to the cross with Christ.

It was on the cross that the law carried out its death penalty against us. Therefore as far as the law is concerned we are now dead to the law. There is nothing that the law can do to improve our standing before God and there is nothing that the law can do to hurt our standing before God. We can live for Christ because we are dead to the law. So we have gone pretty deep into verse 20 but sometimes we need to keep it simple too. And look at Paul's simple summary at the end of verse 20.

He says the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. And the simple truth of Galatians 2.20 is that if you are a believer the Son of God loved you and gave himself for you.

Even a child can understand that but overstating the significance of that sentence is impossible. To every believer the Bible says that the Son of God loved you and gave himself for you.

[37 : 29] So now that Paul has talked about the problem of sin and the process of sanctification in the last verse of tonight's text we see the purpose of the sacrifice.

The purpose of the sacrifice. And that heading has one more word than the previous two headings and that extra word is important. The second V in this heading is a reference to a specific sacrifice and that is the sacrificial death of Jesus on behalf of all believers.

Here is Galatians 2.21 It says I do not nullify the grace of God if righteousness were through the law then Christ died for no purpose.

Paul's point is that if it is possible to be justified by working the law then there was no reason for Christ to be crucified. That means his death was pointless his work was in vain and his cross was unnecessary.

If our own works can save us then Christ's death was unnecessary. Or maybe Christ's death was insufficient so that when he hung dying on the cross and said it is finished it really wasn't finished after all.

[38 : 42] You can see the absurdity of that. Either salvation comes through the finished work of Jesus Christ or it comes through human effort but not both. If we can be saved by our own works then Jesus was a false Messiah who died a worthless death on a meaningless cross.

Martin Luther said that it was an intolerable and horrible blasphemy to think up some work by which you presume to placate God when you see that he cannot be placated except by this immense infinite price the death and the blood of the Son of God one drop of which is more precious than all creation.

In fact anyone who tries to add works to faith is treating Jesus exactly the way his enemies treated him when he was dying on the cross. Timothy George wrote Christ did die for something of course but to be more accurate about that Christ died for someone.

He died for you as a believer. He died for me as a believer and he died for anyone who is a believer. The purpose of the sacrifice was to nullify the eternal effects of sin for anyone who believes in Christ.

Only the sacrifice of the perfect Son of God could accomplish that. When we truly understand that we no longer will want to sin and that is why the Judaizers were wrong that teaching justification by faith alone would encourage people to sin.

[40 : 25] the supreme motive for all spiritual devotion and obedience is gratitude to the sovereign gracious Lord because of what he has done for us and that of course is another way to state the main idea.

Here's the main idea again justification by faith in Christ changes people's desires and motivates them to live for the glory of God. The key to the Christian life is faith in Christ not just the Christ who died on the cross for you but the Christ who still lives in you.

We live by faith when we believe Christ every moment of every day. We believe him to be our sustenance and our strength. We believe him to be our love and joy and peace.

We believe him to be our satisfaction more than money and houses and cars or any other stuff. We believe Christ to be our purity and our holiness and our power over sin.

This is Christianity believing Christ to be everything you need for every moment you live. You live by faith in the Son of God. As you reflect on what salvation means always remember Galatians 2 19 and 20 for through the law I died to the law so that I might live to God.

[41 : 46] I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh. I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this reminder of how important justification by faith alone in Christ alone is.

Let us always remember the high price that was necessary so that we could be justified by faith alone in Christ alone. Help us to stay true to that doctrine.

Help us become more and more aware of just how precious that doctrine is as we become more and more like Christ himself. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
Amen.