

Not Justified by Works of Law but Faith in Christ

Galatians 2:15, 16

Presented by Bob DeWaay
May 19, 2013

1

Paul Continues to Correct Peter

Galatians 2:15 (NASB)

"We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;"

- Paul has in mind at least himself and Peter and likely all Jewish Christians (there is irony here)
- The issue of table fellowship is still in view
- What is at stake is the truth of the gospel (Galatians 2:5 & 2:14)

2

Jewish Christians know justification is not by works of law

Galatians 2:16a (NASB)

nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law

- At issue is not just a local rift, but the only basis of salvation for all peoples everywhere
- Paul will argue in Galatians 3:10 that all who of "law works" are cursed
- "Something more" is what destroys the gospel

3

Faith Alone

Galatians 2:16b (HCSB)

but by faith in Jesus Christ.

- This could legitimately be translated “but only by faith” (so Thomas Schreiner)
- “in Jesus Christ” translates the genitive as objective; it could be “by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” (subjective – so the NET Bible)

Paul’s Chiastic Structure in Galatians 2:16

Galatians 2:16 a-e

nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law

Not Works A
Faith in Christ B
Trusted in Christ C
Faith in Christ B'
Not Works A'

Justification by faith and not law works

Galatians 2:16c – e (HCSB)

And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law

- This describes the judicial action of God apart from human merit or effort
- This includes the eschatological verdict before God’s final judgment seat

Paul cites the OT as proof of “not works”

Galatians 2:16f (NASB)

since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Psalm 143:2 (NASB)

And do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no man living is righteous.

Implications and Applications

- > Right standing before God is found in Christ alone by faith alone
- > No human has anything to contribute so we must cling to the cross
- > We must repent not only of our sins, but of our self-perceived goodness

Right standing before God is found in Christ alone by faith alone

Ephesians 2:8, 9 (NASB)

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Romans 3:22 (NASB)

Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

The judicial verdict is future and certain

Romans 5:8, 9 (NASB)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

No human has anything to contribute so we must cling to the cross

1Corinthians 1:18 (NASB)

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Revelation 3:17 (NASB)

Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

We must repent not only of our sins, but of our self-perceived goodness

Philippians 3:7, 8 (NASB)

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,
