

## Galatians 2:11-21

**Main Point:** We as followers of Jesus are not justified by our actions, but we are justified and made righteous before God by our faith and not by our works.

Context

Antioch was the first Gentile church

Before this the majority of Christians came from Jews

The Jews carried over their emphasis for following the Torah (set of laws to follow)

### (V. 11-14)

Now I want to stop and pause and focus on what a big deal that is. Peter eating with Gentiles was showing huge and Godly love. He was laying down his past customs to share a meal with the Gentiles, which for the Jews was a huge and holy part of the day where we focus on

How do you think it made the Gentiles feel when the Jews wouldn't even eat with them because of their customs?

The circumcision party was attempting to do good works and follow what they knew to be true, but in the process they were pushing the Gentiles away. They were pushing people that God loves and wants to reach away. Our "good" actions can do the exact same thing. Paul tells us in Romans that "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." If we go to Refuel and Challenge, and Ignite, and Church, and Life Groups, and in the process we have pushed others away, then all of those good actions then become sin. This is exactly what the Jewish Christians were doing when they stopped eating with the Gentiles. Unfortunately we've all been one side or the other in those situations. Everyone in the room at some point has been either the Gentile being shunned or the Jew who is doing the shunning.

Now unfortunately I identified with the Gentile. A common question I got was, "Are you going to have your tattoos removed?" In this situation, I was the Gentile with a sinner's past and was being asked if I was going to conform my story so that I fit in with the "righteous" or "holy" standard. Why would I remove my tattoo when Christ is using it to reach people? Why would I remove it when Christ has redeemed pagan symbols and now uses them to spread his word?

My point is Christ doesn't have a Christian standard mold that we all have to meet, and that is exactly what Paul says in the following verses

### (V. 15-16)

"Because by works of the law no one will be justified" is a common theme in the Bible, even in the old testament where The Torah was all they had to appease God. David, who is described as a man after God's own heart is found saying in Psalm 148:2 "They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one." We have a broken set of laws, or more likely a broken set of people following a set of laws.

Luckily the story doesn't end there. Paul tells us in these verses that us breaking those laws is not what makes or breaks our eternities, but instead it is our faith in Christ that is enough. But if I'm not held to the law then does that mean I can do whatever I want? Certainly not! James addresses this in the book. James 2:14-17 - <sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,<sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Our works are not what save us, it is our faith in Jesus. Good and righteous works are the result of our Faith and love for Christ and flow from having a loving relationship with him.  
(V. 17-21)

Jesus taught that if you had faith in him that you were part of and one with him and therefor each other (John 17:21-23) <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Paul often got the question "If a sinner is one with Jesus does that make him a sinner?" Absolutely not! Jesus is not taking sinners, stripping away their sin, and rebuilding sinners. Jesus is taking sinners, stripping away their sin, and molding them into something new and righteous. He's making us into something that will bring joy to God's heart. That is the stripping away process that Paul refers to when he says "For through the law I died to the law." You see, back in that culture if you were put to trial and put to death you were then dead to the law and the law held no further claims to you. No other crimes or sentences could be given to you.

Christ has taken our sinful selves upon him, put them to death, and now lives in us. I might still have Hindu Chakras tattooed down my spine, but the sin that was there when they were put on is no longer there because Christ redeemed it, and made it good. He uses that part of my back story to Glorify my God.

As we wrap things up I have something very important for you, out of anything you were going to take home with you it is this: It is not your actions that God loves, it's you. And your faith and your love for him is what it takes to be right with God.

If you're in here tonight and you're constantly trying to do more and earn your way to God and it never feels like it's enough I want you to hear this: I've been there. I searched every religion I could get my hands on. I meditated and burned incense and I knelt before idols and I performed rituals and I followed all these rules all in the hopes of appeasing the god that created me. And with all that I came to know a God who accepts me the way I am. One that I don't have to follow rules for, but instead one that I love.

Can you imagine if we all lived that out? Where we weren't worried about what we look like to God and others constantly?

Can you imagine how the world would be if we fed the hungry guy on the street despite what the people driving past might think?

Can you imagine if we shared the Gospel with our classmate even though it might be an uncomfortable conversation?

And can you imagine what our world would look like if we stopped trying to be what we think God wants us to be and just started loving God?

See that's the kind of relationship we used to have with God, way back in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had a perfect and right relationship with God, but they did the one thing they weren't supposed to do and sinned against God. And if you sin against a perfect and absolute being, then you sin absolutely and there is nothing we can do to mend that barrier, as much as we try. But God, loving us, regardless, sent his one and only son, being perfect and absolute to pay that price for us, raising three days later and conquering death so that we might have a relationship and eternity with God . And all we have to do is accept that gift and surrender our lives to Christ and we immediately receive the Holy Spirit who is our seal of salvation and guides us in all that we do. And if this is something you want to know more about I'll be standing in the back.

### **Applications:**

Good works should flow from our relationship with God.

Ask yourself how much of your faith is based on Culture and how much of it is based on Christ?

Find peace and know that Jesus is enough.