

4.07.2024

Chapter 2 – No Confidence in Man

Justified by Christ Alone (vs. 17-19)

Galatians 2:17-19: “But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.”

Well, the question resounds, as we come to this book of Galatians, what do you really believe in?

One of the great passages of scripture is found in Romans 5:1. It reads this way,

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Well, that says it doesn't it? How are you justified? By faith through Him; not of ourselves, nothing that we can do. It is important that we take man completely out of the formula. Unfortunately, the world is very syncretistic in the sense that they're wanting us to amalgamate all the religions together. “All roads lead to Christianity,” and the perception that it's all part of us getting along together; that peace will come that way. The world is not only wanting us to do that, but I think in many of the “Christian” circles, I think they're wanting us to be ecumenical. That is to say, that just because somebody puts the word “Christ” or “Christian” in the mix that we believe the same thing that they do. So, let's just all gather around the flagpole and pray. Well, I can't always agree with that. I mean, we're not ecumenical. We're not drawn together to people because of the fact that they have named a certain name. We're looking for those that actually by truth walk according to Christ, and so there is a clear division in that. If in fact you don't make that clear division, what you begin to find is not only confusion, but of course the name of Christ is torn down because man puts humanism in all religion. It's fundamentally the thing that separates us from all other faiths; that all other faiths, fundamentally are humanistic. What I mean by that is that they put their prime importance on human rather than divine matters; stressing man to be the answer to the problems rather than God. Once you begin to do that, then it becomes all about works and performance, and man begins to elevate himself. The perception is that man's going to solve the problems of

humanity; maybe through scholastic means or in some cases, democracy. Our thought is that we just get everybody to vote together. I mean obviously if the majority votes on something, it must be right. Well, we see that that's not true. Socialism doesn't work. I mean, everything that is out there demonstrating man's power, legalism or whatever, has failed throughout the years. I mean, if that wasn't true, then why do wars still exist? Why does hate still exist? Why do we have degradation and why do we have decay, division, depression and all these things that are part of humanity? Why haven't we fixed that yet? The answer is pretty clear, man can't fix those things. It's impossible for him to do it. We believe that fear, anxiety, hopelessness and all of those things that we all wrestle with and battle with can only be fixed by one person, God Himself. Only God saves, as Isaiah says, "I am the Savior. There is no other." There's no other savior. There's no other one that can rescue you. Man is shallow and he's superficial in his endeavors to try to do the right thing. Unfortunately, by virtue of peer pressure and because we seek to affirm ourselves and in some way find attention from man; maybe perhaps because we want to be attracted to them or by them. Maybe our thought is that in some way they'll accept us by virtue of us acquiescing to their thoughts, but man continually devises, works and lives in accordance with what he thinks everybody else is doing and what he thinks everybody else expects of him. So, he falls in line and that kind of thing.

That's one of the reasons why in Galatians 1:10 the question is posed, "Who am I seeking to please? If I seek to please man, I wouldn't be a bond servant of Christ." I have to make that decision and there is a clear demarcation in true faith, and that's what I really want to emphasize because where there's this sense of ambiguity, that's not true faith. True faith is clear. There is a right and a wrong, and a black and white and absolute, and that's found in Jesus Christ. "I am the way," and it's pretty clear, "The truth and the life." In other words, there's not another truth. There's not another life. There's not another way. It's all Christ.

One of the statements that Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 15, that sort of clarifies this is if there is no such thing as resurrection, then we're the most to be pitied because we believed in the wrong thing. You go, "Yeah, but it's just one thing." Everything that we believe in is crucial, and if in fact you compromise on the one, it's basically calling God a liar. So, we come back to that point that there is no other way. I know people will accuse us of being rigid and the perception is that we're being close minded, which is as we've been talking about in Proverbs; a pretty smart thing to do because you don't want to go anything to go in and everything to go out. The wisdom of God begins to stir in our hearts, and we know that there is only one truth. It is that clarity that Paul wants to emphasize in particular because he sees the compromising of the justification by faith. So, man is perceiving that he's justified by perhaps other means. Now, in order for us to clarify this, we have to define what it means to be justified. So, let me just make this as clear as possible. "To be justified" literally means that God sees you as completely innocent. You've been literally deemed blameless before God. I mean, to perceive in any way

that you and I could ever get there by any other means, but by through Christ is insane. The obvious truth, if in fact we were looking for truth, is there's absolutely no way.

That's why John will say in 1 John 1, "Look if you say you have no sin, you're just not being truthful with yourself. I mean, you're deceiving yourself. You're lying to yourself," and I get it. I mean, people do that all the time, but truth seekers come to Christ, and that's why we come to Christ. We realize in our hearts and in our minds, there is no other way; I could not be good enough. So, the sense of justification is that we're literally declared righteous by God, innocent of any trespass or any offense; faultless before God. So, the question now is posed, "How are you justified?" So, you have to ask yourself, "Can I justify myself?" Paul's going to be dealing with that whole concept of "only Christ justifies."

Let me give you some verses that really shore this up, because I think it's important that we are very clear that there is no other way.

The passage in Romans 5:1 is one that I quoted to you.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

(2 Corinthians 5:21) "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

How do you become righteous? It isn't through us, but it was Him who became sin for us, and we now become, listen to the phrase, "the righteousness of God." That's blameless. Think about that, blameless before God.

Acts 13:39 reads this way, "and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

"Freed from all things." Could the law of Moses do this? "I think if I really work on this, I can be freed from all things." You can't, and all you have to do is take a year off, if the Lord doesn't take your life before then, and give it a try. I can pretty well guarantee you it's not going to work.

Romans 3:24 reads this way, "being justified as a gift..."

So, ok, you don't earn gifts.

"Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

I mean, you just couldn't get much clearer than all of these verses.

1 Corinthians 1:2 reads this way, "... to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus..."

Literally being set apart; made holy in Christ Jesus.

(1 Corinthians 1:30) “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

That's why he goes on and says, “Let him who boasts boast in this, that you know God.” I'm absolutely positive it's not anything you did at all.

Paul will start off in Galatians 2:16, “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; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”

How many times do they say it? I mean, you walk away from that verse, and you go, “Ok. Are you sure that I can't be justified?” You can't walk away with that. You have to walk away with a sense of “I know full well this to be true.”

(Galatians 2:17) “But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ...”

Let's just take that particular phrase. The question that oftentimes arises is that maybe there's something else I have to do in order to be deemed innocent before God. “I mean, I have to be a really good person, right, to be accepted?” Well, quite frankly, you can never be good enough, but beyond that point, the only reason we strive to be good as believers is because we want to; where the want to comes from is Christ. It's the Spirit of Christ in me, that makes me want to do the right thing because I can guarantee you that, as Paul will say so clearly in Romans 7, “The only thing the law did is make me want to sin. When the law started telling me I couldn't do certain things, then that's exactly what I wanted to do. So, it didn't show that the law was bad, but it showed that I was bad. It also revealed in a very graphic way how rebellious my heart is because all you have to do is tell me not to do something, and that's what I want to do. I mean, that goes all the way back to the garden. So, the fundamental point is that we can't do good because we don't want to. We don't have the heart for it. We don't have the spirit for it. We don't perceive it as an advantage. We perceive it as a negative. So, we run to sin for comfort. We run to sin to find some sort of gratification, and our perception is, “Hey, this is a pretty good thing.” Now, we don't want to tell people that. So, we form religions that make us look good. Then it all becomes about saving face and about democracy.

Paul used the phrase, “while seeking to be justified in Christ.” There is a sense of emptiness, I think in all of us that we come to realization that there's got to be something more beyond my ability to be good because it's not working. When you go through Scripture, you begin to realize like in John 3, John will ultimately say this, truth seekers come to Christ because they realize

that He's the only way. So, we believe in Him because we know that we can't believe in ourselves. We know that we're failures.

In first John 1:8, he makes reference to the fact that you and I deceive ourselves if we think that we're better.

By the time you go all the way back to the book of Job, you realize that even Job, who was declared the most righteous man in the face of the earth, states in Job 9:2, "Hey, you know what, to be righteous before God? That's impossible." Now, that was Job saying that. So, I know that maybe we perceive ourselves as pretty good people, but I don't think we're next to Job.

In Ecclesiastes 7:20, Solomon will say there's not a righteous man on the earth who continually does good. Is there anybody that does good things continually, all the time?

I think this is one of the reasons why in John 3 you see Nicodemus, who's a Pharisee Sanhedrin, and he goes to Jesus at night. He goes, "I've seen something in You that I haven't seen in anybody else. You must be from God." And Jesus says, "Nicodemus, you're not going to be able to understand anything until the Spirit of God comes in you, and that's a new birth." But how wonderful it is that he introduces to Nicodemus the love of God in John 3:16. I mean, here's a Pharisee that's been detached from all those things, and yet God brings him into a personal relationship with God. Do you think he'd ever heard of that before? The realization that it's not about your ability to learn this or to even, through ritual and rote, memorize it, but this has to be from the heart. It has to be a heart change and you can't do this.

We go throughout Scripture and in Matthew 19, there is a rich young ruler that comes up to Jesus in verse 16 and he goes, "What good thing do I have to do to have eternal life?" Now, the question is "Why is he asking the question if he knows and is satisfied that he is good?" But there is a realization that something is lacking in him though his perception is that he's a pretty good guy. The ultimate result is that there were certain things he was unwilling to give up, and there's certain things he was unwilling to do. He had convinced himself that he was a good person, and I think we kind of settle for that because of the fact that we all fall short of the glory of God.

In Luke 10 we see one of the statements that Jesus makes is that you try to justify yourself, and there is this sense of self-righteousness.

(Luke 10:25) "And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'"

(Luke 10:26) And He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?'"

(Luke 10:27) And he answered, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

(Luke 10:28) And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.'

(Luke 10:29) But wishing to justify himself..."

What is that telling you? He didn't feel justified. Even though he came up with the right answer, the perception is maybe he even externally did some of these things, but he then turns to what I see as legalese. He goes into the realm of "Ok, I know I'm not good, but technically I'm good. I mean, I am good to most people that I really like. So, who is my neighbor?" If you can isolate and put technicalities in the Scripture, then you can begin to justify yourself by virtue of ruling out certain scenarios or certain people in your life. "I know I'm supposed to be patient and loving with some people, but there are some people, no way. I'm sure God understands that." Have you ever heard the phrase, "I'm sure God understands that"?

In Luke 16 you see the Pharisees, and this might surprise you, religious leaders love money.

(Luke 16:14) "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money..."

Jesus was talking about what's really valuable.

If you back up into chapter 16, He says, "Look, relationships are more important than money." That's fundamentally what He says before this, and He uses an interesting phrase to describe money, "mammon" which is kind of like a god. So, it personifies money as a god that we worship, and so He uses the word "mammon" within the passage. The way He describes mammon is "unrighteous mammon" in verse 9.

Then in verse 10 He will talk about if you're faithful in what is of little value, which is mammon, which we perceive money is of great value, and God is of little value. So, that's where we kind of have things mixed up.

So, that's why it starts off in verse 14 that the Pharisees who were lovers of money were scoffing at Him for saying that relationship is more important than money.

(Luke 16:15) "And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men'..."

Now, what is he saying? Well, fundamentally, the point is that they're not really concerned with being justified before God They're concerned with how men see them; if in fact man is impressed by their status, by virtue of the things that they possess. It's like a kid walking up to another kid maybe the first time he moved in the neighborhood. So, he wants to impress the kid. He goes, "I have a new bike." His perception is because he has a new bike, he's going to be accepted or people are going to go, "Wow, that's a really a cool kid because he has a new bike."

The Pharisees perceived by their status and their position that you wouldn't question them because of where they were, and they justify themselves that way. So, the fact of the matter is that we realize our shortcomings, and so we fabricate a lie. We rationalize in the sense of maybe coming in with some kind of legalese in order to justify where we are or we put ourselves in some sort of position to where people don't question us. They can't question us because of all that we have, all that we own, all of our status. "They must be holy people, especially if they wear long robes and especially if they're quoting all these Scriptures." So, we settle for the external. Now, the fact that Nicodemus is going to Jesus at night is the realization that it's not filling the void. Nevertheless, people throw up all these masks instead of dealing with reality. This is one of the concerns that Paul has.

In fact, if you go back to Galatians 2, even Peter and Barnabas were falling for this because they were concerned about what people were thinking about him. The word that Paul will use in reference to them is "hypocritical."

(Galatians 2:11) "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

(Galatians 2:12) For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw..."

Why? "Well, because Gentiles are sinners, right? I mean, that's what you guys say, and because the guys with all the long robes and everything like that. I mean, probably some of the guys that walked in still had maybe garbed that was associated with other gods. Clearly they had names that were associated with other gods. You don't want to be with those people." Well, that would be true if in fact they weren't seeking Christ, and they weren't genuine about their faith, but are we measuring according to what somebody does or are we measuring according to where their heart is?

(Galatians 2:13) "The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy..."

Galatians 2:12 says that because they feared the Jews they became aloof, and they found themselves in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried by hypocrisy; which you can't imagine that Barnabas would do something like this, as encouraging as he was to so many people, why wouldn't he be encouraging the Gentiles at this time? It would be a great time to do that.

In verse 14, he's saying this is not the truth of the gospel. We believe that there is no one that is righteous, no, not one. It is only by the favor, the graciousness, the love of God in which we are saved. There is no difference. There is no separation.

As Paul will make clear in Galatians 3:26, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

(Galatians 3:28) “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

You’ve all become heirs with Him. The clarity of it is blatant within the passage.

He starts off in Galatians 2:17, “But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ...”

Well, that's what brought you to seek Christ; the realization that you couldn't do it.

“... we ourselves have also been found sinners...”

Now, the point is that “being found sinners” is in the passive; in the sense that those around them, the other Jews, were saying, “You're not doing all the things that we think you should do according to Judaism. So, therefore, you're just like the Gentiles.”

If you back up to verse 15, “We are Jews by nature and not sinners...”

The point is that the heathens are not seeking the ways of God. Naturally, they don't seek the ways of God, and the Jews do seek the ways of God. So, they don't perceive themselves as sinners in that sense. However, the fact that Paul was seeking to be justified only through Christ, the perception is “So, you're discarding all of the rules and all the regulations that we believe are necessary to keep you holy. You're disregarding that.” Paul says, “I know that you perceive me just as much a sinner as the Gentiles.” In other words, “I know that you sense that I am hostile towards God by virtue of me not doing the things that you want me to do.” It's the demands of man, right? What man likes to do and what religion does is it puts all of these heavy burdens on people, and it says, “You have to jump through these hoops.” It puts us in not only a state of regiment, but a state of ritualistic following in line. It is that which literally pulls the heart out of man, and in that endeavor, we find ourselves lying to ourselves, lying to other people, putting on masks, going through the motions, always concerned about what everybody else is thinking. The fundamental point of the book of Galatians is that if in fact you live this way, you are always in fear of what everybody's thinking and worried about how they perceive you, you'll never be free; you'll never live your life. I've seen people, they're always worried about what their family and the people that live around them are thinking. You know, it's one of the things that keep people from actually confessing their sins. I mean, they know that they've done wrong, but it's all about saving face. It's all about looking good and they're so concerned about that. When you and I begin to operate in that realm, we literally doom ourselves to being victimized with frustration and disappointment the rest of our life because we're doomed to rigidity, regiment, and to religious “have tos.” We find ourselves in a place in

which it's just ritualistic performance. How is it to live that way? I just can't imagine living my whole life that way.

Paul starts off in verse 17, "... while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners..."

That is to say, "You found us to be sinners." His question in the end of verse 17 is "Did Christ cause me to sin?" Now, we wouldn't naturally put it in those particular terms, but what he's doing is he's taking it to the extreme so that they will understand that their way of viewing things is extreme. So fundamentally, what he's basically saying is, if more is needed, other than Christ, then Christ is not good, He's destructive. Think about that. If in fact you think you have to add something to what Christ did, then the message of Christ which says "Christ is enough" in all those verses that we read, He has lied to you. He has actually been an agent to hinder you from being helped rather than from really helping you. That's pretty drastic, but it gets us to the point of thinking to that degree.

He then goes on and says in verse 18, "For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor."

Now, what he's talking about in that phrase is "If I build a house that I tore down," and when he uses the word "destroyed," "*katalyō*" is the term that he uses in the text. It's dealing with "dissolving" or "disuniting from." And the fact that he uses the word "rebuild" is actually talking about a house. So, the emphasis is he's putting us in a metaphor of a home. God does this. It's not unusual. God will use the highest standard of devotion to give us insight into things. For instance, He'll talk about the relationship between the man and the woman. He will talk about a father and a son and the mother and the children. He will use those to draw upon. Why do you think God invented those things? Why do you think He created those things? As Ephesians 5 says, it's so that you might understand the depth of what God is saying. You and I can't really begin to understand what God is saying until we start forming some sort of relationships. Once we start forming those relationships, then if you've ever been hurt by somebody, now you can understand some of the things. So, it's a different perspective.

He puts it in the context of the fact that "I came in a situation, and I saw that something was hindering me from having a relationship, and I say, 'no more.' But then I go back to the very thing that I destroyed, and I say, 'Well, maybe more' to what I said was hindering the relationship and was messing everything up." Why would I do that? So, if I build a house I tore down, I dissolved and disunited from, and I show myself a treacherous liar. It's hard for us once again to really fully grasp this.

In fact, it's interesting that in Galatians 4, he begins to talk about a household of Abraham. Abraham had one wife, but kind of had another wife too. It's an interesting picture that he

draws of the household that is divided, and peace wasn't afforded until the wife said, "Get this woman out of here."

(Galatians 4:30) "But what does the Scripture say? 'CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.'"

In other words, there's a division there. What's the division? You have two loves in the same household. It doesn't work. There has to be a whole devotion. So, you can't have a relationship, break off the relationship, start another relationship and then start to build back that old relationship. It makes you a treacherous opportunist and a liar. Now, let me see if I can explain it even more, because that's fundamentally what he's talking about, that vacillating back and forth.

If you look with me in Romans 7, you'll see this picture. When we read the beginning of chapter 7, you're going, "Why is he even going into this?" He's trying to show you how treacherous it is to try to foster two relationships.

(Romans 7:1) "Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?"

(Romans 7:2) For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

(Romans 7:3) So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

(Romans 7:4) Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

(Romans 7:5) For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death."

That is to say, in that old relationship, the old relationship only causes us to long for other things. It must not have been a good relationship. Obviously, the Law isn't the best of relationships.

(Romans 7:6) "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit..."

That's the point.

“... and not in oldness of the letter.”

In other words, at this point, we fall in love. Until we fell in love with Christ, we couldn't want to do the right thing. You had to start a new relationship, but the only way you could start a new relationship is there had to be a death. What does “death” mean? It means that you have no contact anymore with that thing. What does that mean? That means that you can't interject works ever again because it's dead. You die to those things.

Now, if you're not confused, I'm going to confuse you a little bit more. Deuteronomy 24 gives this picture of relationships and treachery. I'm going to try to explain this quickly which is almost impossible.

(Deuteronomy 24:1) “when a man takes a wife and marries her, it happens that he finds no favor in his eyes because he's found some indecency in her...”

“Uncleanliness,” I think, is the King James way of putting it; disgrace, shame, and dishonor.

“... he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house.”

It's like Paul when he says, “I sent the Law away.” He uses the word “destroy,” “the things that I've destroyed.” It's the same word. “I sent it away. I disunited myself from it; I divorced myself from it.”

(Deuteronomy 24:2) “and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife,

(Deuteronomy 24:3) and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife.”

In other words, he either divorces her or he dies. It would seem to think that “Well, she's free to marry whoever she wants.”

(Deuteronomy 24:4) “then her former husband...”

Remember the first husband? It's the first husband that sends her away because he sees some uncleanliness in her; indecent, horrible person that she is, he declares it so. So, she goes and marries somebody else, and then that guy either gives her a certificate of divorce or he dies. So, it's not saying in that case that she was necessarily rejected. The point in verse 4 is that her former husband, that is to say, the first husband who initially had sent her away is not allowed to take her back.

Watch the phrase, “Since she has been defiled.”

Now, the text is not saying that God has declared her defiled; the text is saying that the husband declared her defile. Keep reading.

“... for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”

Now, if you were to look at this whole background, Deuteronomy 23 and 24, you're going to see a montage of people taking advantage of other people and being warned against that. You can't take advantage of other people. This particular passage is zeroing in on that. You can't go into a relationship, and then declare, “I'm divorcing myself from this person because they're just despicable. I'm not going to have anything to do with it. You have no idea how horrible this person is,” and then go back and remarry them. Why? You now have appeared to be a liar, a transgressor and, worse, a manipulator and a user of people because the only reason that you have a relationship is if you can perceive that it has benefit to you. By virtue of you vacillating, it proves that you were not concerned with righteousness. You were concerned about how it affects you because you're now willing to go back to her because now it benefits you. You cannot do this. This is the abomination to God. This is you playing, and this is why Paul says in this particular passage, “If I rebuild what I once destroyed, I prove myself to be a liar and a user.” I mean, “I receive Christ when it's comfortable for me and I put Him on the shelf and go into Judaism when that's comfortable for me; I'm playing on two relationships.” It's treachery to God, and God says it's an abomination. Anytime you start throwing works in your faith, it's an abomination. Do you understand that?

I mean, this is fundamentally what he's talking about because what he goes on to say in verse 19 is the same way he describes it in Romans 7, “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.”

In other words, “I'm dead. I'm wholly alienated from any connection with ever trying to do things on my own.” Every time we interject our own works in the midst of our salvation, it's an abomination. For by Grace, you have been saved through faith. It is not your works. It's nothing that you and I do. Now, I know that had Paul not put it in the setting of treachery towards a person, we would not perceive the treachery. But this is why this particular book is so important, because he's trying to convey the depth of the abomination of trying to put works in this. This is why we are not ecumenical. So many churches blend in works of man and try to convey the goodness of man, and we stand on the pulpit of there is no one that is righteous. No, not one. Only through Christ are we justified by faith. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our part, that we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21) It's all Him.

Now let me just say this, if you go back to living, being concerned about what people are thinking, you're living in that world of abomination. That's fundamentally what he's saying to Peter and Barnabas. You're playing two against each other and this is horrible. Why would you even think about doing this to your relationship with God? So, he's not only demonstrating how horrible it is to God, but he's also demonstrating and will demonstrate in the book of Galatians, the place that you put yourself in is in this world of treachery; in which you now put man who, I guess, sets himself up as your judge. You place him in a position in which he thinks in terms of bias, prejudice, nepotism and physical attraction. He's literally driven by greed and he's opportunistic and the things that he does, he's very deceitful; he's untrustworthy and he's unfaithful, and you say, "I want to please him"? Good luck with that. Those things that man does, the way that he lives, is where we place ourselves. That's one of the reasons why so many people are so torn apart. Oftentimes we try to please people, and some people are just plain miserable people, right? All of us fundamentally are, but some people are more than others. When you begin to try to please them, the thought is, "what did I do wrong?" Just stop. A person is miserable because they're a miserable person. You didn't make them miserable. Now, you may have encouraged, but I think you just poked their sore. The fact is that they're miserable, and that's why they're acting miserably. The only thing that can change them is the heart of Christ.

We have a wonderful faith. We cannot compromise this faith with humanism in any way. We know this: that we are justified by Christ alone.

Closing Prayer:

"Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your love for us; for Your completed work on the cross. There's only One we have to please and that's You. We do that by admitting that in us dwells no good thing; we do that by declaring all of our righteousness is You. You've become righteousness in us, and we begin to celebrate You alone; not us, not our performance, and not our ability to rationalize, or ring some sort of technicality in. We don't try to build up a facade. We don't try to make ourselves look like we're impressive. We don't have to do that anymore. We're freed from all those things. We could just declare, "Yes, I'm a sinner, but God loves me. Now that His Spirit dwells in me, I want to do the right things. He's changed my heart." How wonderful it is to walk in the freedom of Christ rather than walking in the Law.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're asking you to do is rethink how you're walking because a lot of misery is going to come to you as you begin to go back, as Peter and Barnabas went back to the Law. They started being concerned about what everybody else was thinking. You have One to please. Ask yourself just a simple question, "Who do I seek to please?"