

Handout 1: Galatians Lesson 2

In Galatians 1:1-2:21 St. Paul defends his Gospel and his authority as he makes three claims:

1. There is only one Gospel and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul preaches.
2. Paul was not commissioned by human beings but received his Gospel through a revelation from Jesus Christ Himself.
3. The Gospel that Paul preaches is the path to liberty from the curse of the Law.

St. Paul's Visits to Jerusalem in the New Testament
1. Paul's visit to Jerusalem after his conversion experience (Acts 9:26-27).
2. Paul and others visit Jerusalem after delivering their charity contributions to churches in Judea (Acts 12:29).
3. Paul attends the Council of Jerusalem (Acts chapter 15).
4. Paul's final visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15, 17).

... *a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ* (Gal 2:16a).

The Theology of Justification is defined as the process of a sinner becoming justified or made right with God. The Council of Trent (1545-63) defined justification: "Justification is the change from the condition in which a person is born as a child of the first Adam into a state of grace and adoption among the children of God through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ our Savior."

The Church teaches that justification is the true removal of sin and not merely having one's sins ignored or no longer held against the person by God. It is the supernatural sanctification and renewal of a sinner who then becomes holy and pleasing to God and an heir of eternal salvation.

The Catholic Church identifies five elements of justification:

1. The honor of God and of Christ is the primary purpose of justification.
2. Eternal life for mankind is its secondary purpose.
3. The main cause or agent is the mercy of God.
4. The instrument of cause is the Sacrament of Baptism.
5. That which constitutes justification is the justice of God by which He makes us just by His sanctifying grace.

Grace: "In biblical language the condescension or benevolence (Greek *charis*) shown by God toward the human race; it is also the unmerited gift proceeding from this benevolent disposition. Grace, therefore, is a totally gratuitous gift on which man has absolutely no claim ..." (*Modern Catholic Dictionary*, page 166).

Paul's point in 2:19-20: if he returns to the old Law from which he has been liberated, then he is indeed in sin by declaring that Christ's Passion was not sufficient to liberate him from the curse of the Law. He, like all Christians who have died to Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism, are like Christ dead to Mosaic Law—Christians are dead to Mosaic Law because they are now obedient to a higher Law—the Law of grace that generates faith in Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Handout 2: Galatians Lesson 2

The Purpose of the Law and Grace		The Effect of the Law and Grace	
Law	Grace	Law	Grace
Based on obedience through works of the Law (Gal 3:10)	A gift of God that leads to faith (Gal 3:11-12)	Failure to uphold the Law puts the believer under a curse (Gal 3:10)	We are justified by grace that activates faith (Gal 3:3, 24)
Serves as a guide to holiness (Gal 3:23; 4:2)	Centered in Christ (Gal 3:4)	Teaches about faith (Gal 3:23)	Gift of Christ living in us (Gal 2:20)
Serves as a tutor to identify sin (Gal 3:24)	Liberates us from the Law to experience true freedom (Gal 4:30-31)	A preparation for the Gospel that shows the way to Christ (Gal 3:24)	Brings about our adoption as sons and daughters of God and heirs of Christ (Gal 4:7)

In Galatians 3:6-13 St. Paul quotes from six Old Testament passages:

1. In verse 6 he quotes Genesis 15:6, *Abraham put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness*. Abraham’s act of obedience was “credited as an act of righteousness before circumcision was commanded as a covenant sign in Gen 17:9-14.
2. In verse 8 he quotes Genesis 22:18, *and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be find blessing because in all this you obeyed my command*. The universal blessing is found in Christ’s universal kingdom of the Church.
3. In verse 10 he quotes Deuteronomy 27:26a, *Cursed be he who fails to fulfill any of the provisions of this law!* The Law only condemned it could not save.
4. In verse 11 he quotes Habakkuk 2:4b, *but the just man, because of his faith, shall live*. In the New Covenant kingdom we are saved by faith in Christ Jesus.
5. In verse 12 he quotes Leviticus 18:5ab, *Keep then my statutes and decrees, for the man who carries them out will find life though them*. The Law could only show the way to salvation but could not give eternal salvation or the gift of the Holy Spirit.
6. In verse 13 he quotes Deuteronomy 21:23b, *God’s curse rests on him who hangs on a tree ...* Jesus took the curse of the Law upon Himself in His crucifixion as He hung on a tree.

Paul is presenting the alternative to disobedience to the Law which leads to transgression of the Law and the curse of God’s wrathful judgment. The alternative is God’s promise of salvation through Jesus Christ in the gift of unmerited grace and faith:

The Law → transgression → wrath	God’s promises → unmerited grace → faith
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God’s power to make us godly is greater than the power of concupiscence which tempts us to sin (see CCC#405, 1264, 2515-16).