

Right with God

I. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way for anyone to get right with God. (2:15-16)**

A. Jewish people are not declared right with God by keeping the Law of Moses, but through faith in Christ Jesus. No one, Jewish or Gentile, will be justified by keeping (living according to) the Law of Moses. (2:16)

1. The word justified means declared righteous.
2. To justify means to declare that a person on trial is not liable to any penalty.
3. To justify means to declare that a person on trial is here forward entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law.
4. Justifying is the opposite of condemning (the opposite of a judge pronouncing the sentence of condemnation). Justifying is pronouncing a judgment of acquittal and legal immunity.

B. We are not justified by what we do, but by what Jesus has done for us. (16)

II. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ places all people, Jew and Gentile alike, on equal footing as guilty and in need of God's grace. (2:17)**

Option 1: If the Gospel of Jesus is correct, then Jewish people take their place right along Gentiles as sinners. According to the Gospel of Jesus, Jewish people are sinners too. So is Jesus a minister of sin? Paul says that Jewish people are sinners right along side the Gentiles, but not because of Jesus. Paul responds, *"Returning to Law-attained righteousness is sin."*

Option 2: If the Gospel of Jesus is correct, then people can disregard the Law of Moses. So does Jesus promote sinful living? Paul responds, *"No. It is I (the one sinning) who is the sinner, the lawbreaker, not Jesus."*

- A. The term "sinners" is the same here in verse 17 as in verse 15. And the phrase *"We Jewish people are not Gentile sinners"* in vs 15, connects with the phrase *"We (Jewish people) ourselves have also been found to be sinners"* in vs 17.
- B. Option 1 is preferable. That Jews and Gentiles are saved the same way implies that they have the same sin problem, the same sin condition, the same sinful, hopeless standing before God.
- C. This leads the Jewish people to ask the question, *Has not the gospel of Christ made us Jewish people sinners, like the Gentiles?*
  1. Paul answers the accusation emphatically, "No!"
  2. Jesus' gospel does not *make* it this way; Jesus' gospel recognizes that it is already this way. In fact, Jesus' gospel proclaims that it is this way.

III. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way anyone can stay right with God. (2:18-19)**

- A. Returning to the Mosaic Law (as a basis for relationship with God) after having come to God through faith in Christ, would make a person a transgressor of that Law, which pointed him to faith in Christ in the first place.

- B. In coming to God through faith in Christ, Paul died to the Law of Moses, such that he could not possibly return to it.
- C. In destroying all hope for salvation by human works, the Law of Moses actually opens the way to discovering new life in God.

D. When Paul says he died to the Law (Vs 19) he can't mean that we are no longer supposed to obey the law of God at all.

1. Paul means that he died to the Law of Moses *as a way of earning God's favor*, as a way of being saved. The Law can't condemn me because Jesus has paid my penalty. I am *in Christ*, united with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. Paul died to seeking salvation by law keeping the day he met Jesus.
2. Before he came to Christ by faith, Paul strove to obey God's Law for Paul and for Paul's own benefit, to get the reward of salvation. Now Paul obeys God out of love and gratitude.

IV. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way anyone can live right with God. (2:20-12)**

A. *Crucified with Christ* points to the believer's union with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. It is a real union and is beautifully pictured in believer's baptism.

1. Union with Christ means that my old self-centered, self-directed life died and was buried. The new me arose with Christ in newness of life.
2. The Lord Jesus lives in and through me as I follow Him in faith.
3. How do I know that Christ lives in me?

I can see in His teaching in my beliefs, in my values and behaviors.

I can see that I am His follower by looking at my priorities and my actions, at what's important to me and at what I do and don't do.

B. If obedience to the Law of Moses must be added to faith in Christ to make His death sufficient for our justification, then Paul concluded that Christ died needlessly. If the Law of Moses could save anyone, then Jesus died in vain.

There are two ways to nullify God's grace, to receive it "in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1):

1. By receiving it and then going on as though it made no difference by continuing to practice the Law of Moses as the way to stay right with God. (Gal. 5:4)
2. By receiving it and then going on as though it made no difference by continuing to live sinful lives "that grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1) Paul does neither of these. He refuses to return to legal bondage but at the same time he repudiates the suggestion that freedom from law means freedom to sin. (Romans 6:15)

**Message**

Getting, staying and living right with God requires living faith in Jesus.

Action Points:

Where do you struggle? Getting, staying, or living right with God?  
Let's talk about it.