

3.24.2024

Chapter 2 – No Confidence in Man

Justified Not by Man's Effort (vs.15-16)

Galatians 2:15-16: "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; 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."

That passage is not only self-explanatory, but it's repetitive. A man is not justified by the works of the Law and by the works of the law no flesh will be justified. It's pretty clear, isn't it? Yet man just has a hard time comprehending that. It is a bizarre thought. One of the great books that we oftentimes go back to, especially if we're suffering, is the book of Job. As you read the book of Job, Scripture tells us this was the most righteous man on the face of the earth. I love Scripture because if ever you perceive one thing might bring you satisfaction or another thing might bring you happiness, God goes, "Ok, let's take it to the extreme." So, "I would be really happy if I was the wisest man on the earth." No, you wouldn't. Just read Ecclesiastes; Solomon wasn't a happy camper. "What if I had everything and all the riches?" Well, continue to read Ecclesiastes because Solomon literally had everything as far as his eyes could see. The wonderful thing about Scripture is that it takes you through the process so that you don't have to go through it yourself and come about the end of your life saying, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity."

You go through and you begin to realize that not only is Job an example of the most righteous, but when you come into the New Testament, is there a person that has tried really hard to do everything that the law of God said? Scripture says, "Yeah, his name was Paul." Previously Saul. So, you read a passage such as Philippians 3 and you begin to see that this guy did literally everything according to the law. When we read something like that, our thought is, "Ok, yeah. He tried really hard." Yeah, you have no idea what Judaism is about. I mean, Judaism goes really into impossible stuff, and it just overwhelms you with the abundance of law. They actually have figured out that there are 613 laws in the Old Testament that you should be obeying. 365 of those are in the negative and the rest are in the positive, but that would be a negative for every day that you wake up as you go through the law. I guess the question in the Old Testament would be "Have you obeyed all those laws?" That in and of itself would be hard, but the Jews

have a way of making things far more complicated than they ever could be. It's one of the reasons why I really love the Jews. There are not a people more pragmatic and there's no one that is more detailed than the Jews. So, if you think about doing all the things that the Law of God tells you to do, they're just going to take it a step above.

For instance, did you know that in their law there are literally 39 categories of keeping the sabbath holy? Now, I'm talking about 39 categories which in and of themselves are books and volumes dealing with each category. Just to name a few, the first is "plowing." There are laws dealing with plowing. Sowing, reaping, gathering, threshing, winnowing, and kindling. Did you know that if you're starting a fire on the Sabbath, you can't do that? Even if it was something as small as a toothpick, you can't start a fire according to their law. When Paul says, "I've obeyed everything that the law of God said." I think that's quite a bit. I won't name them all, but one pretty interesting to me was the law of carrying. There's only so much you can carry. You're not allowed to carry a handkerchief in your pocket walking on the sabbath. You're not allowed to have and hold things like pebbles and stones on the sabbath because that would be unnecessary objects; whether it be a key or a handkerchief, that would be breaking the law of God. There is also a law of slaughtering. Obviously, you can't slaughter things on the sabbath, but did you know that swatting a fly is considered slaughtering? So, you can't swat a fly or a mosquito. You have to let it bite you throughout the day, I guess.

When you consider these laws, and Paul says, "I have kept all of the laws." That's an amazing thing for somebody to say something like that. When you read about a person such as Job, the most righteous man on the face of the earth, ok, he's there. You see at the beginning of the book of Job, me and Robert have been going through it together and it says that he was bringing offerings and giving offerings before God for his family; not for him, he's the most righteous man on the face of the earth. It's one of the things that God begins to bring out as you go through the life of Job, and he has all these horrible things happening to him. We read something like that, and we go, "He's the most righteous man on the face of the earth. Why would he have all these horrible things happen to him?" Because he trusted in his own righteousness. Job had to come to a point of seeing that he was not righteous enough before God.

One of the great passages of the Old Testament is Isaiah 6 where you read of Isaiah coming into the presence of God. He sees the angels just whisking around these seraphim which are basically called "flaming ones." Another way of putting it is "lightning bolts" that are going around the throne and they're constantly saying, "There's nobody like Him. There's nobody like Him." They never stop because every second there's nobody like God. So, the magnificence of His presence, and here the train of the robe of God is flowing the universe, and Isaiah goes, "Ok, I should not have spoken. I don't know what I've been talking about. The way that he puts

it is “My lips are unclean.” Now, this is a prophet who’s very righteous, but he realizes that he had no idea what he was talking about when he finally came into the presence of God.

Ultimately, the same thing was true with Job. So, Job will argue and debate and perceive. One of the statements that he begins to wrestle with as he realizes “Ok, so there must be something I’ve done wrong” is in Job 4:17.

He asks the question, “Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?”

Can he do everything that a perfect Creator would want him to do? Has he done everything he should?

(Job 9:2) “... But how can a man be in the right before God?”

As He comes before the presence of God, he says the same thing that Isaiah says, “I close my mouth. I have nothing to say. I had no idea that You are this great.

I was talking to someone the other day, and they said, “You know, when I get to heaven, I’m going to ask God...” I said, “No you’re not. You’re going to get before Him and you’re going to go, ‘I had no idea. That question should have never popped into my head’” and all those things would just dissipate at the realization of how marvelous God is. The problem is that we don’t see that. We oftentimes perceive ourselves as being far more righteous than God. I know there have been times that people have thought they were far more loving than God was or far more understanding than God. “If God just knew this.” Obviously, He doesn’t know enough being omniscient and omnipresent. Of course, you see some of those arguments that Job banters back and forth in the book of Job. Paul is going to be dealing with that. Paul is wanting us to know at the very beginning of this book of Galatians is that none of this is from man. Man could never think this way; he wouldn’t ever think this way, and that’s what makes our gospel so wonderful, unique and different from religion. Religion is all man thinking up how he can be righteous. If you look at all religion, it has works involved. It’s fundamentally man trying to be good enough, trying to do good, or maybe he can meditate himself into doing good; maybe he can get into some nirvana type state in which ultimately, from what I understand, you meditate into nothingness. I guess when you’re in nothingness you can’t do anything wrong because you’re basically nothing. How wonderful it is that God calls us something, but God says, “I’m going to rescue you.” What has to happen first is the realization that we are sinners. This was hard in the mind of a Jew to perceive that they could be a sinner because they’re Jews; they have the Law of God. Nobody knows the Law better than they do and at least on the external they practice it.

(Galatians 2:15) “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles”.

That's a great phrase, isn't it? I don't know if Paul was being a little facetious or not, but his point is well-taken that the Jews perceive themselves, and really when he's talking about Jews, the word is from where we get the name "Judah." So, Judah is actually the foundation of the word "Jew." The point is that it really focuses on birth, origin, their religion, and their traditions. In other words, the focus of Judaism is God. That's the point. I mean, you go over to Jerusalem even now and you'll see these guys with these little caps and sometimes little boxes on their head and they're going against the wailing wall. The desire to do the right thing is over the top.

"We are Jews by nature..." In other words, this was not man manipulating; this is what God has placed us in.

"... and not sinners" is an interesting term. It's not necessarily saying that they've not done something wrong. The word that he uses is dealing with somebody devoted to things other than God. More specifically, that "the different nations of the world are focused on pursuing their own way, but not us Jews. We pursue God's way."

If you've ever seen any traditional things the Jews do, you realize that everything they do is somehow tied to their worship towards God. The Gentiles and other nations do whatever. It's kind of a smorgasbord out there and they'll choose whatever they want to. So, that's the fundamental point. In other words, "Our focus is God; their focus isn't."

(Galatians 2:16) "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law..."

Now this will be the point that he makes in this verse. "Man is not justified by the works of the Law." Well, let's break down that phrase. "Justified" would basically be you being declared innocent. Declared innocent by who? God. So, here's the fundamental point: How are you declared righteous in God's eyes? It's not "How are you declared righteous in your eyes," or "Are you better than somebody else?" That's one of the reasons why Job asked, "Can a man be right before God?" Because how does God see things? So, "justified" is you being seen as righteous in God's eyes; pure in His eyes.

"... a man is not..." Now, the word that he uses for "man," "*anthrōpos*," has a connotation of weakness; which Paul is purposely wanting to interject that because of the fact that even the Jews are acutely aware of the weakness of man. They've read in Scripture that the most righteous man on the face of the earth, Job, was still prone to weakness. Solomon, the wisest man on the face of the earth was still prone to weakness. David, probably one of the most passionate guys about truth, still prone to weakness. The fundamental point, and Paul will actually talk to the Corinthians about this in 1 Corinthians 3:4, he says, "Why are you guys worried about what group you're in? Are we not mere men?" His point is that we are prone to weakness. He will go on to say, "Do you not walk like mere men?" If anybody is in anyway leaning towards truth, they're going to have to admit "I've done something wrong today and

every day that I live.” As Ecclesiastes says, you don’t continually do right all the time, do you? There’s no man that does that.

“nevertheless knowing that a man (in his weakness) is not justified (made pure or declared righteous by things that he does).

The word “works” is emphasizing the efforts of man. “*Ergon*” is the word that is used. Once again, it’s where we get the word “energy.” So, it’s the energy that he expels. The thought is “I’m going to put a lot of effort into this. I’m going to struggle to do this and I’m going to find myself acceptable to God.” He goes, “Not going to happen.” Because it’s in the genitive case within the passage, it’s dealing with not only that but the feelings that you have and the aims and endeavors that you have in the midst of trying to do the right thing. In other words, when you pursue and try to do the right thing, are there thoughts, feelings and emotions? Sometimes anger or frustration? I mean, you don’t express them obviously because that wouldn’t even look righteous, but you’re still feeling them. So, the point of the passage is that man in his weakness in the pursuit of his efforts to do right, still has a tendency to feel bad about it; sometimes even upset over the fact that he has to do this very thing. “You mean I have to actually think of my neighbor equal to myself? Do you know my neighbor?” So, you begin to think through these things and realize, “Well, I’m still going to do the right thing” and we oftentimes do the right thing because of show, but the Law is an outward motivator. So, the Law says, “If you don’t do it, you’re going to be in trouble.” So, you do it externally at least, but by the works of the Law because God is looking for something else. He is not looking for the outward appearance.

(Isaiah 29:13) “... Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me...”

The works of the Law just can’t get into that particular realm because it’s not able to. It’s not our nature to think appropriately. It’s not our nature, really, to love. It’s not our nature to care about anything that’s not pertaining to us. When somebody passes away in our sphere of influence, we feel extremely upset about it, but when somebody passes away somewhere far away, “It’s not my problem.” The point of the matter is that if it affects me in any way, I can have some emotions. But the point is I don’t operate in that realm. My heart doesn’t think outside of the benefits that it causes me. I wonder why it is that I can’t think right; why it is that I don’t have the right heart because we’re going to be judged according to our hearts.

(Romans 2:16) “on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

How are you judged? Through Christ Jesus. In other words, what are the secrets that he’s talking about? Well, he’s talking about the motives and intentions of one's heart; things that

people don't see. The reason why he's conveying that to the church of Rome in particular is because they were very external. They knew the Law and were doing the Law. So, he's saying to them that it needs to be from the heart. So, it's the same thing that was true with the Pharisees. He says, "Outwardly, you look like white-washed tombs, but inwardly, you're just full of dead man bones." In other words, "There's no righteousness inside you." The things that you do are done for all the wrong reasons. It's bizarre that people can ever learn and are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth as Paul will write in 2 Timothy 3. As the Jews were very knowledgeable in the word of God; always learning about these things. But there's a passage in John 5. Look at the way Jesus deals with this particular issue of the Jews. I mean, they knew the Scripture better than anybody else, right? Who knew the Scripture better than them? Let me just say this, this is why Bible studies alone aren't necessarily the greatest thing that could ever happen. I'm not trying to knock out Bible studies. I'm just saying that just because you're learning about the Bible, it doesn't mean that you're practicing what it says. So, it's about practicing what you're reading.

In John 5:39, He turns to the Jews and He says, "You search the Scriptures..."

That's very admirable.

"... because you think that in them you have eternal life..."

"It's in there somewhere."

"... it is these that testify about Me".

Now, His point goes on, fundamentally, "... you are unwilling to come to Me..." (John 5:40)

The point is "You can't see this. You don't get it." It's always been bizarre to me. Of course, as believers our eyes are opened. A passage that talks about this is 1 Corinthians 2. As Paul will say, we speak a wisdom not of this world. Of course, the world is trying to figure out academically what God is about. Correct me if I get this wrong, but according to the world, if you know more then you'll do the right thing. So, "what we need to do is educate people." If you educate people, then they'll become better thieves.

(1 Corinthians 2:6) "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

(1 Corinthians 2:7) but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery..."

Why is it a mystery to them? They just don't get it. Why don't they get it?

I was thinking, you take somebody that never knew anything about a car ever and you walk up to them, and you go, "Ok, see that thing over there? That car?"

“Yeah.”

“Ok, fill it up with gas.”

Now, the guy takes the gas pump and somehow figures it out. So, they get it started, put it through the back window and start filling it up. Why would he do that? I mean, his perception is “Well, I’m filling it up,” but the problem is that he has no idea how that car works. He doesn’t know anything about an engine or a gas tank, he just knows somebody told him to fill up the car with gas and that’s what he does. When you think about it, this is the way people deal with the Law. They know they have to do the Law, but in their pursuit of doing the Law, they hurt people and themselves. They destroy things. I mean, you walk up to somebody, and you go, “Ok it’s Valentine’s Day, what you need to do is buy valentine cards.” So, the guy goes out and he buys 10,000 valentine cards. Then, he has them shipped to the person that he’s supposed to have them shipped to because hey, anything worth doing is worth over doing. I mean, that’s the way the Jews thought. So, you just do more of it, right? 10,000 cards, but not one of them was signed by him. So, what’s that telling you? Well, he did the things of the Law, but there’s no evidence of the heart that’s there. So, the person receiving the 10,000, after they dig themselves out, the guy says, “How did you like my Valentine?” They go, “I hated it” and he has no idea what they’re talking about. Some of us are going to stand before God, and we’re going to go, “How did You like everything I did?” He goes, “I never knew you. You never had a heart in it. You never loved Me or cared for Me. Your heart was not with Me. We weren’t together in this.” And people are going to have that “deer in the headlight” look.

Corinthians says, “Look, we speak a wisdom that is a mystery to people. They don’t understand what we’re talking about.”

(1 Corinthians 2:10) “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

(1 Corinthians 2:11) For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

(1 Corinthians 2:12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

(1 Corinthians 2:13) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

(1 Corinthians 2:14) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

He doesn't know anything about the car. He just knows that somebody told him to fill it up.

(1 Corinthians 1:15) "But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.

(1 Corinthians 2:16) For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ."

Paul is trying to convey through the Jews is that "I get it, you are hard workers, but everything you're doing..." Just like Paul himself, "I thought I was doing a favor to God by killing Christians because this just shows my zeal and my righteousness for God, but I realized that I had no idea because it wasn't within me; it was all the external. "I have to do this; I have to do that." I was really into the whole performance thing and yet I realized that none of the performance mattered to God." I guess that's a big shock for people. "What? God's not asking for perfection?" He never was. He knows that we're but dust. He's asking for the heart, "Do you love Me?" It's the same thing He was asking Peter after the end of His denial. "Peter, I just want to know one thing, do you love Me?"

In Galatians 2, it's very clear that no man is justified or will in any way be accepted by God, seen by God as righteous or innocent by his efforts, energy, emotions that he has in the midst of that; in the midst of his pursuit in anything that he tries to do according to the Law. Once again, the issue is not that the Law is bad in and of itself. Paul makes mention of that in Romans 7 where the whole dialogue is about "Does that mean the Law is bad? Sin somehow took the opportunity through me and the commandment and deceived me. It killed me. So, then it must be that the Law is bad."

He goes on to say in Romans 7:12: "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

(Romans 7:13) Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? ..."

In other words, what does the Law do? It establishes standards; it establishes right and wrong. I mean, if you do something wrong, the last place you want to be is where the Law is. Fundamentally, what he's saying throughout Romans 7 is "The only thing the Law can do is make me want to sin more because it told me not to do something. As soon as it told me not to do something then I wanted to do it."

I remember when I was about 10 years old, we went to New York, and we were going to see different sights. So, one of the places that we stopped to see was Rockefeller Center. Rockefeller Center has a number of buildings; I think 22 acres there, but besides that, they have a tall building. At about the 60 or 70th floor, you can get out and walk around. They have this wall about 4-5 feet tall. Of course, a 10-year-old can't really see over the wall. So, the person

that was leading the tourist group was talking, my parents were listening. I could care less. I didn't even know what she was talking about. So, I was meandering as 10-year-olds do, and I said, "Look, a wall." The wall had signs all on it, but I wasn't sure what it said. So, I started climbing on the wall. I actually get one leg over on the other side and then I find my dad snatching me off the wall and I began to realize, "Ok, we're pretty high up." You begin to realize how horrible my dad was that he was so legalistic as to snatch me off that wall, or maybe the law was loving, and the signs were there to protect me. You see, I couldn't see that because my heart was thinking, "It's just blocking me from getting what I want; it's keeping me from getting what I desire." One of the things that Paul is trying to convey is all the laws that God gave us are good. "You shouldn't steal. You shouldn't covet." It's saying that you can have a better relationship if you do these things; if you don't do those things, you're going to have lousy relationships and people aren't going to like you. You're not going to get along. Families are going to have divisions. He gives us all those laws because He loves us.

The same thing is written in Hebrews 12:6, when it says,

"FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

If you're without discipline, you're really not a child of God in the sense that "are you really a beloved?" It is His love that does that, but a person whose heart is wrong and only has a desire to do what they want to do, perceives all those things as not only negatives but as hostile forces against them. There's absolutely no way that we can see that correctly unless we have the Spirit of Christ in us because the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of a son that sees everything that His Father is doing as good. He believes. He knows who His Father is, and He knows that His Father would never tell Him to do something that would be hurtful to Him. He would always tell Him to do things that would be good for Him. That's the heart of Christ. Now, the question is "How do you get there?"

The way that Galatians 2:16 reads is

"nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus..."

"By putting your trust in Christ Jesus" would be another way of putting that.

"... even we have believed..."

There's that word "faith" again; same word by the way.

"... in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ..."

There's that word again.

“... and not by the works of the Law...”

In other words, what is faith, and why is it different than works? Well, “faith” is relational; “works” is effort. So, it is my effort and my resolve that works in the realm of trying to make things happen, whereas “faith” is “I’m actually trusting somebody.” In order to trust somebody, there has to be a relationship there. The question is “Why would you trust Jesus?” The answer becomes extremely simple and easy once you see Him on the cross because you understand that this is One who died for you. “Why would you trust Him?” “Why wouldn’t you trust Him?” is the bigger question.

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

I love the fact that he threw in the word “flesh” because “flesh” is literally described in the Jewish mind as that which can be taken and stripped off the bone. The point is that it’s prone to go into decomposition; all flesh is like grass. So, the point of all of that is the things that your flesh desires are all prone to go away.

(Galatians 6:7) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

(Galatians 6:8) For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption...”

That’s what the flesh is made to do; just live long enough and you’ll find out.

“... but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

So, what is he saying? He’s saying that anything you try to do in your own power without the heart of Christ in it is just going to be a waste. “Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it.” (Psalm 127:1) If God is able to give to His beloved even in their sleep; but God is looking for the heart that will completely trust in Him. That takes it beyond a different level. It takes my hands off it. As Paul would say, “That no man would boast.” Well, there's a number of reasons why man shouldn't boast.

- 1) He can't do anything.
- 2) Everything we do will not last.

So, why am I wanting to invest in things that won't last, and why am I pursuing in a realm in which I can't accomplish anything? Literally, Galatians is saying that you can't accomplish anything in the flesh, in your own power, own efforts, and your own pushing. So, what do you need to do? Believe.

One of the great passages is found in 2 Corinthians 5. There are so many passages that we can turn to in dealing with this. Romans 3 reminds us that all have sinned; there's none righteous,

no not one. So, all of that is pretty well established. The point of this is that in Christ we become a new creation. That's one of the things he states in 2 Corinthians 5.

(2 Corinthians 5:17) "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

What brought us to that point?

(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."

What happens now? Well, you believe that. You start off by saying, "I believe that God so loved me that He gave His Son. I believe that." You receive that gift that He gave you and you realize that if He spared not His own Son, everything God does has to be out of His love. You literally breathe in the Spirit of Christ that says, "Not my will, but Yours be done."

(2 Corinthians 5:15) "and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

What is he talking about? I now want to do the Law, but I don't want to do the Law for performance. You know how the Jews in Matthew 6 or Matthew 23 did all their deeds to be noticed by men? They were always trying to in some way go for the place of honor to be recognized by pretense. They would do the long prayers in front of everybody. Why were they doing what they did? Well, to bolster themselves; to make themselves look exalted, but we don't do that. You think that in our arrogance to stand before God as wretched as we are, and walk up to God and go, "You know, I am pretty good," that He's going to be somehow impressed with that? How about if we stand before Him and go, "Your love far exceeds anything that I could ever do. Your love is demonstrated to me through Your Son, and I accept that gift. I know that the only way that I'm going to be accepted by You is if I have Your Son's heart in me. So, just as I am, I come." What do you think happens then? God says, "Done. You're My child. I accept you."

Well, let's read it in Titus 3. I like the way it's put in particular in Titus because there's a realization that we were actually saved for a purpose. I think sometimes the thought is "I'm saved by grace," and as the argument is by some of the Romans, "Can we now sin that grace may abound?" and God says, "Ok, you didn't get it." You didn't understand how that car actually runs. That car runs because of your gratitude for His Son and gratitude always energizes you to do the right thing. This is why James will say, "Look, you say that you have faith, but where are the works?" If in fact you don't show the demonstration of your love for God, then where's the reality of it? Now, it's not the work that saves you, but the works are the evidence that something has changed. Not only when you work, do you do it for only God,

because Scripture says to do all for the glory of God; which is the gamechanger in and of itself. But when we do it, we actually do it with a good heart. In fact, Peter will say, “We’re happy that we’re able to suffer for the sake of Christ. The glory of God rests on me.” We count ourselves blessed according to Matthew 5.

(Titus 3: 3) “For we also once were foolish ourselves...”

That’s a mouthful, isn’t it? How true is that?

“For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”

If you look at a lot of those things, it doesn’t focus as much upon external actions as it does the heart; the sense of rebelliousness and hate inside the heart; things that aren’t easily seen. He says that if you’re honest with yourself, you know that’s true on the inside, but watch what happened:

(Titus 3:4) “But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

(Titus 3:5) He saved us...”

You go, “Why would He save me? I mean, I know who I am. Everybody else might think that I’m ok, but I know who I am. Why would He save me?” That’s the question, isn’t it? However, that’s the question that motivates us to do right.

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit”.

That is to say, “I have a new Spirit in me.” What’s the Spirit? “I want to do right. I don’t even know how I got here.”

(Titus 3:6) “whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

(Titus 3:7) so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

What more could He do for us? Let’s see, nothing. He’s done it all. I mean, everything.

(Titus 3:8) “This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.”

What made us do the right thing now? Well, it’s certainly, obviously not a performance thing, but now we know how to do the right thing; we actually know where to put the gas. See, we actually know that we should write something on the card. We understand what the purpose of the card is. Now, we’re doing it right whereas before we might have been trying to do it and

overdo it and do it in such a twisted way that it hurts people. One of the things that the Jews loved doing was being condescending and critical towards everybody else because it always made them look better. So, if you could make other people look worse, then you obviously have to look better in their presence; but we don't do that anymore. We know that God is looking for the Spirit of His Son, and if we'll operate in that realm, He's pleased with that. Jesus says that a good tree bears good fruit; a bad tree bears bad fruit. You will know them by their fruit. What is He talking about? He's talking about the evidence of what somebody is actually producing.

I've oftentimes thought about this, as he states in Galatians 6, "Look, if you labor in the flesh, of the flesh you'll reap corruption; if you labor in the Spirit, of the Spirit you'll reap life." What does he mean by that? You can do a lot of really good deeds, you could help a lot of people, and you do it in your own power for maybe self-praise or recognition, whatever, maybe you just want to do it for the people around you; if you and I do anything other than for God, it's not going to last and it's not going to make a difference. Now, let me see if I can clarify this. There's been a lot of people that have literally emptied themselves in pursuits of things under the guise of "I want to be a good person" or "I want people to think of me as a good person," but they didn't do it for Christ. All you have to do is look behind them, and you begin to see not only carnage but waste. They go, "I thought I did good. Why isn't it lasting?" See, the wonderful thing about discipleship is if in fact you do it right, you're drawing and leading people to Christ. If in fact they're genuine in their heart, that heart will last, and you'll bear fruit that will remain. Nothing else won't. There are so many things that man pursues in his own efforts and thoughts that he actually thinks "I'm going to accomplish something great. God says, "Did you do it for Me?" You go, "Well, what does it matter?" He goes, "That's the gamechanger in everything." Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God; that everything you and I do are for him. When we do that, you're going to find that lives are going to start changing. In fact, what's an interesting phenomenon is God starts bringing people into your life that need help. You're going, "I don't even know why they're coming to me." God goes, "Because you're the one that will point to Me." So, you'll find the things that you do are now lasting and produces good fruit.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your word and for the fact that we become justified, acceptable to You by virtue of believing in Your love and Your grace for us. It's obvious that we couldn't be good enough to be acceptable to You. In fact, we're not even sure why we should do those things that You tell us to do. We find ourselves constantly questioning, "Why do I have to do this?" or "Do I have to do that?" But when Your Spirit comes within us, we get it. So, we just start doing the things that we know pleases You. We know. Your

Spirit affirms in our spirit that we are children of God. You take us beyond the realm of legalism and religion, and we realize that relationship is what You've been looking for all along.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I don't know if you're trying to look good; if you're trying to please people or trying to get brownie points, but I do know this, there is a way to please God. I also know this, without faith, it's impossible to please Him. You must first believe that He is all that He says He is, and first and foremost, that He's a powerful God; a Creator of the universe that loves you, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. If you do everything you do for Him, you'll see the rewards and how wonderful the rewards will be. Your loved ones will start to change, the people around you will see the wonderful truths of God's word and their eyes will be opened. Their heart will be opened to the love of God. You'll begin to produce fruit that remains, but just remember, without Him you can't do anything.