



SERIES: We Are Free December 2022-January 2023

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Thursday, December 22, 2022

Scripture: Galatians 2:15-16

TITLE: No Excuses

What's the best excuse you've ever come up with? What's the reason you've given to excuse bad behavior in your life? As a parent, I think I've probably heard virtually every excuse in the book for such a wide variety of both sin and simple accidents.

But here's the problem with excuses. They do not deal with or remedy the problem. And our greatest problem is sin. We need a fixer to fix our greatest problem. That's what we want to talk about as we continue our study of the book of Galatians. Here's what Paul writes beginning in Galatians 2:15.

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners...

When he says “we,” he is talking about himself, Peter, and any Jewish Christians. These are the people who are born Jewish. That's pretty straightforward. But then he says, “and not Gentile sinners.” That probably sounds a little odd, if not a little bit offensive.

According to Jews, Gentiles were sinners by nature because they had no law to guide them in proper living and in pleasing God. This had nothing to do with one people group being sinless and another people group being sinful. The Jews were God's chosen people. They were children of the Abrahamic covenant. But they were still sinners. But the difference between Gentiles and Jews, as Paul is referring to here, is the law that guided them.

I think we need to be really careful to never forget that we are all sinners in need of a savior. The religious elite would point back to their heritage. Remember, that's what Paul did in Philippians. He said, hey, I'm a Jew of the Jews. I was born into the right family. I have the right degrees. Look at my background; look at what I've accomplished. But then he flips the script on its head and says but all that is garbage. That means nothing because, ultimately, nothing we do and nothing from our past or our ancestry can save us. It's ultimately the blood of Jesus Christ. In fact, this is what Paul will really hit home in verse 16.

...yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

I hope you just saw what Paul just said. Paul said in three different ways we are not saved because of what we can do, but rather we are justified by what Jesus Christ has done. No amount

of rule-following can make a person righteous before God. No amount of law-abiding can make us justified before God.

“Justified” is a legal term. It means to be declared righteous or without blame. It's like a judge hitting his gavel and saying, “I find no fault in this man or this woman.” They may go.

So Paul says a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. That first statement is general. No one can be saved by their own good works. Why? Because the Bible declares it, and history confirms it. There is none righteous, no not even one. Period. No one seeks after God. We are all sinners. According to Paul in Ephesians 2, we are dead in our trespasses and sins. Dead things can do nothing because they are dead. We need help. We need a fixer. Or better yet, we need a savior.

Paul reminds us today that we cannot save ourselves. Everyone is born a sinner in need of a savior. Religion won't save you. Your family heritage or faith background will not save you. Christ saves each person individually as a gift through faith.

Do you believe it? You can not earn, buy, or win salvation. It is a gift alone. Paul said it three times in one verse. We need to believe it and then live it.