

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of June 2, 2019

This Week's Focus: Faith in Jesus Christ's perfect life and his atoning death is the sole basis of our justification before God.

This Week's Text: Galatians 2:16-23

"It is entirely by the intervention of Christ's righteousness that we obtain justification before God. This is equivalent to saying that man is not just in himself, but that the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation, while he is strictly deserving of punishment." **John Calvin**

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- Share what the Holy Spirit impressed on your heart and mind from this week's text.
- How can an unrighteous person be declared righteous (justified) by God? Read verse 16 and discuss how the doctrine of justification is *plainly taught* (16a), *must be personally received* (16b), and is *pervasive in scope* (16c).
- How does the Roman Catholic church's teaching of justification mirror the false gospel espoused by the Galatian Judaizers? What does it mean that Christ's righteousness has been *imputed* to us? Explain how adding anything to faith for the purpose of justification is an attack on the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's substitutionary atoning sacrifice on the cross (verses 16, 21)?
- Discuss how we can make sense of the apparent contradiction of Paul's doctrine of justification (faith alone in Christ alone) and the Apostle James' words in James 2:17-18, 24 by considering the following:
 - **Context** – Paul wrote Galatians to combat *legalism* and James wrote to combat *antinomianism*.
 - **Faith** – Paul wrote about a living, vibrant *faith* in Christ that saves while James treated the difference between genuine faith that saves and fake ("dead") faith that cannot save.
 - **Justification** – Paul used the term justification in the strict, legal sense (declared righteous) while James uses Abraham's works as an illustration to demonstrate that genuine, active faith is the result of justification.
- Explain the difference between the following:
 - Good works evidence faith in Christ and the imputation of his righteousness

- Good works performed to merit righteousness
- Have you explicitly or subliminally bought into the lie that you can achieve favor with God on your own (i.e., self-justification)? Having been saved from slavery to sin, have you fallen back into a mindset of works-based justification?
- Discuss how Christians are, in Martin Luther's words, *simultaneously just and sinner*. Does justification mean that we have a license to continue sinning (verse 17, Romans 6:1-2)?
- What does it mean to die to the law (verse 19)? How does the law work as a diagnostic tool for sin and direct us to the gospel?
- Why did Christ die for rebel sinners (verse 20)? What are the daily implications and blessings for those who have trusted in the meritorious work and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ?
- Is the Holy Spirit leading you to declare and demonstrate the good news of Jesus Christ to someone you know?