

Reformation Day 2017
Galatians 2:16

“The Church’s true treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Martin Luther

The gospel that the reformers preached with a firm reliance upon Scripture alone was simply this: People are made right with God by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone. This is found when using Scripture alone, rather than adding tradition to Scripture.

That word alone is very important. The Church, even when it was in error, had these words in their teaching and thinking – grace, faith, Christ, glory and Scripture. What created a break from the Catholic Church and the Reformers was the word alone.

One reason why the Reformation matters today is that the Reformers looked into the Bible and they found an answer to the question,

“How can a sinful person ever be right with a holy God?”

Justify is a legal term that means to declare as righteous. This is better than declaring a person not guilty. It is the declaration that a person is innocent or perfect or righteous. This is the opposite of the word, “condemn”. You cannot be declared righteous by trying to keep a perfect standard because you cannot be perfect as God is perfect.

Think in terms of a scale from 1 to 100. If Jesus lived a perfect life that earned Him a score of 100, where do you put yourself? To be sure – none of us gets 75 or 50 or even 20. We all get zero because we are all sinners. Saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone means God gives you the perfect righteousness of His Son. You are declared to be perfect in God’s sight. *That’s justification.*

The word justification answers this simple question:

How much will it cost for you to have a guaranteed spot in heaven?

When you understand your justification in Christ, your confidence as a Christian should soar. Since you don’t have to prove your worth to God, you don’t need to prove your worth to people. Instead of chasing after accomplishments and acquisitions to prove your value – you can simply embrace this statement of high value – *Jesus died for you so that you can be perfect in God’s sight.*

You should be hearing both **bad news** and **good news** in the gospel...

The bad news of the gospel is that you cannot be good enough to meet God’s perfect standard.

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus has met God’s perfect standard so that you don’t have to.

How do you receive this justification? By faith. When you respond to the gospel, you are placing your trust in Jesus - that what He has done for you is better than what you can do for yourself.

How much will this justification cost you? Zero. Justification is God’s gift to you. However, Jesus as the giver of this gift has asked you, even commanded you to follow Him. The gift costs you nothing but it comes as part of a package in which you surrender everything to God.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Galatians 2:15-16 and make some observations of the passage that were pointed out in the Sunday teaching. For instance...

- You should notice the word “justify” occurs in some form more than once.
- You should notice two contrasts – one positive and one negative.
- You should notice the mention of Jews and Gentiles.

2. What conclusions do you draw from these contrasts?

3. You may have heard Pastor Karl ask these questions:

- Would you like to know how much your place in heaven will cost you?
- Would you like to know how much your place in heaven cost Jesus?

What does it do for you to know that Jesus purchased a guaranteed spot for you in heaven?

What did you do to get this spot in heaven?

4. You also may have heard Pastor Karl say... *Jesus died for you so that you can be perfect in God's sight*. Is that how you see yourself on a daily basis?

5. Do you never, sometimes or always....feel as if you need to be doing more or doing better to earn a good grade from God?

6. What aspect of the gospel would you like people to understand the most?