

Once again, Paul finds himself writing another letter to try and help people understand law and gospel. The apostles had been teaching the people that salvation came through belief in Christ Jesus. Once you believed that Jesus died for you, then there was nothing left for you to do. They taught that our salvation was solely dependent upon God and on nothing that we could or should do.

But even though they were taught differently, the Galatians still believed in works salvation which means that you had to do something such as obey the law in order to be saved.

But even though the observance of the law is not needed for eternal life, it does hold a special place. Paul called it the disciplinarian. It was the job of the disciplinarian to make sure that everyone toed the line and did what they were supposed to do.

The law has one job and that is to convict you of everything that you do wrong. The law shows you exactly how unworthy you are when it comes to your faithfulness to God and HIS expectations for you. In some ways, the law is a mirror which shows us as we are.

Paul pointed out to the Galatians that the law could not save them but it could help them see the need for grace as opposed to their understanding of doing works.

That grace is found in the phrase, "justified by faith."

What does that even mean for us? To be justified means that one is innocent or guiltless. So as we look at our lives in a mirror with the law on our shoulders, it is very clear that there is no way in which we are innocent or guiltless. We sin against God and one another on a daily basis. We are never innocent or guiltless because we cannot behave. So to claim that we are justified by itself is a wrong statement because it cannot happen. We will never be justified by ourselves.

But Paul does not say we are justified by our own doing; he says we are justified by faith and that is how we are innocent. We are able to declare our innocence through our faith in Christ Jesus. That is after all the whole purpose of Jesus coming to our world.

When we believe in and trust in what God has done through Christ Jesus, then we are justified. We are innocent and guiltless as we stand before God. Yes we are still sinners; we still rebel against God but we also have forgiveness. And the best part about it is that it is freely given to all who believe.

That is grace. God gives us forgiveness and there is absolutely nothing that we have to do in return. God gives us the only thing that can make us innocent through Christ. There is one other thing that we receive through this tremendous gift.

We are no longer divided by race, gender or nationality because we are all one in Christ. Paul said, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." At a time when we tend to look at and focus on what makes us different, Paul reminds us that we are all the same in Christ.