

ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL

The Foundations of Our Faith

Discussion Guide
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Sermon Title

“Justification By Faith”

by Paul R. Martin

Romans 5:1

Introduction: On October 31, 1517, Luther approached the competent church authorities with his pressing call for reform. On this day he presented them with his theses and the request that they call a halt to the unworthy activities of the indulgence preachers. When the bishops did not respond, or when they sought merely to divert him, Luther circulated his theses privately. The Ninety-five Theses spread quickly and were printed in Nuremberg, Leipzig, and Basel. Suddenly they were echoing throughout Germany and beyond its borders.

From a New York Times article, February 9, 2009:

The return of indulgences began with [Pope John Paul II](#), who [authorized](#) bishops to offer them in 2000 as part of the celebration of the church’s third millennium. But the offers have increased markedly under his successor, Pope Benedict, who has made plenary indulgences part of church anniversary celebrations nine times in the last three years. The current offer is tied to the yearlong [celebration](#) of St. Paul, which continues through June. The announcement in church bulletins and on Web sites has been greeted with enthusiasm by some and wariness by others. But mainly, it has gone over the heads of a vast generation of Roman Catholics who have no idea what it means: “Bishop Announces Plenary Indulgences.” In recent months, dioceses around the world have been offering Catholics a spiritual benefit that fell out of favor decades ago — the indulgence, a sort of amnesty from punishment in the afterlife — and reminding them of the church’s clout in mitigating the wages of sin. The fact that many Catholics under 50 have never sought one, and never heard of indulgences except in high school European history (Martin Luther denounced the selling of them in 1517 while igniting the [Protestant Reformation](#)), simply makes their reintroduction more urgent among church leaders bent on restoring fading traditions of penance in what they see as a self-satisfied world. “Why are we bringing it back?” asked Bishop Nicholas A. DiMarzio of Brooklyn, who has embraced the move. “Because there is sin in the world.” The indulgence is among the less noticed and less disputed traditions to be restored. But with a thousand-year history and volumes of church law devoted to its intricacies, it is one of the most complicated to explain. According to church teaching, even after sinners are absolved in the confessional and say their Our Fathers or Hail Marys as penance, they still face punishment after death, in Purgatory, before they can enter heaven. In exchange for certain prayers, devotions or pilgrimages in special years, a Catholic can receive an indulgence, which reduces or erases that punishment instantly, with no formal ceremony or sacrament. There are partial indulgences, which reduce purgatorial time by a certain number of days or years, and plenary indulgences, which eliminate all of it, until another sin is committed. You can get one for yourself, or for someone who is dead. You cannot buy one — the church outlawed the sale of indulgences in 1567 — but charitable contributions, combined with other acts, can help you earn one. There is a limit of one plenary indulgence per sinner per day. It has no currency in the bad place. New York Times, February 9, 2009

Key Bible Truths Regarding Justification by Faith

- We are totally depraved humans and it is not possible to produce any true work of righteousness—not before our new birth, not after it, not ever.** John 15:5 ⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. Romans 3:10-11 ¹⁰ as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; Romans 7:18 ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.
- The purpose of the law has always been to reveal the character of God, and to show us how unlike Him we are, to show how far we have fallen. It has never been for the purpose of making us holy. (the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ, For by works of the law no flesh will be made perfect in His sight)** Galatians 3:24-25 ²⁴ Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Romans 3:20 ²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:27-28 ²⁷ Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Romans 3: 28 (NASB)

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5: 1-2

... 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. Galatians 2: 16 (NASB)

Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3: 24-26

Discussion Questions

1.) xx

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2: 8-9 (NASB)

2.) xx

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3: 8-11 (NASB)

3.) xx

4.) xx

5.) xx

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11: 6 (NASB)

6.) xx

7.) xx

MEMORY VERSE

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5: 1-2

God's Vision and Mission for the Alliance Bible Church

The Alliance Bible Church is a multi-cultural church celebrating the life of Christ in us by:

- Proclaiming the full message of God's Good News to the diverse cultures of McHenry and surrounding communities,
- Discipling believers in living the deeper Christian life,
- Equipping His people for the work of ministry, and
- Demonstrating the unconditional love of Jesus to our community through meaningful acts of service.

