

Grace Over Law – Faith That Sets Us Free



Many people believe that following rules makes them right with God, but true righteousness comes through faith in Jesus, not the law. Join us as we explore Galatians 2:15-21 and discover how grace over law leads to true freedom in Christ!

Introduction

Welcome back to our series, *Freedom in Christ*, where we are exploring the powerful truths in the book of Galatians. Last time, we discussed *The True Gospel – No Substitutes*, where we learned how easily the gospel can be distorted and why we must stand firm in God’s unchanging truth.

Have you ever felt like no matter how much you do, it’s never enough? Many of us live as if we have to prove ourselves to God. But what if I told you that Jesus already did the work for you? Today, we’re diving into one of the most foundational truths of the Christian faith, salvation by grace through faith. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are justified not by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. This teaching is essential because many people still struggle with the idea that they must “earn” their salvation. But the gospel is clear: we are saved by grace, not by works!

The Law Can’t Save Us – Only Jesus Can

We read in Galatians 2:16

Galatians 2:16

(16) know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

In Paul’s day, Jewish believers were struggling to reconcile the gospel with the Law of Moses. Many thought that following the Old Testament laws, such as dietary restrictions and circumcision, was still necessary for salvation. Paul refutes this idea, making it clear that no one can be justified by following the law. If the law could save us, then Christ’s sacrifice was unnecessary.

This is just as relevant today. Many people still believe their good works, church attendance, or moral behavior earn them favor with God. But salvation is not about what we do, it’s about what Jesus has already done.

Imagine a drowning person who keeps trying to swim to shore, even though they are too weak to make it. A rescuer arrives and throws them a life ring, but instead of grabbing it, they insist on swimming harder. No matter how much they try, they’ll never make it on their own. Why do we try to swim harder instead of grabbing the life ring? Pride. We want to feel like we’ve contributed something to our salvation. But grace requires surrender.



That is what trusting in our own efforts looks like. We are drowning in sin, and Jesus is the only one who can rescue us. The law can show us we're in trouble, but it cannot save us. Only Christ can.

Stop trying to "earn" your salvation. Accept God's free gift of grace.

Recognize that good works are a response to salvation, not a requirement for it.

When you feel unworthy, remind yourself: Jesus already paid the price.

Where in your life are you still trying to swim instead of letting Jesus rescue you?

Grace Over Law – Living in the Freedom of Faith

The Apostle Paul teaches us in Galatians 2:19-20:

Galatians 2:19-20

(19) "For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. (20) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul's words here are powerful. He's saying that when we put our faith in Jesus, we die to the old way of life, the life that tried to earn God's favor through performance. Instead of striving under the law, Christ now lives in us, and we live by faith in Him.

Many Christians still struggle with feeling like they have to measure up. We fear we are not doing enough or that God will be disappointed in us. But Paul is saying that the old you, the one striving for righteousness through works, is dead. Now, your righteousness comes from Jesus alone.

Think about a prisoner who has been set free but still chooses to live in a jail cell. Imagine that prisoner stepping out of the cell but still acting like they are in chains, living in guilt, trying to prove themselves worthy. That's what we do when we don't fully embrace grace.

This is how many Christians live when they keep trying to prove their righteousness instead of accepting the freedom in Christ. The prison doors are open, why live like you're still locked up?

Let go of performance-based faith. You do not have to earn what has already been given.

When guilt and shame try to pull you back, remind yourself: You are free! Live like it!

Live by faith, trusting in Christ's work instead of your own efforts.

Today, choose to stop living like a prisoner. What's one mindset you need to surrender to walk in the freedom of Christ?

A Life Transformed by Faith, Not Rules

The Apostle Paul explains in Galatians 2:21:

Galatians 2:21

(21) I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"



Paul's final statement in this passage is bold. If we could be righteous by following the law, then Jesus' death was pointless. But we know that His sacrifice was necessary because no one can perfectly keep the law.

The law was never meant to save us. It was meant to show us our need for a Savior. Once we realize that salvation comes through faith, our lives should be transformed, not by obligation, but by love.

Imagine receiving an expensive gift, something you could never afford. Instead of accepting it with gratitude, you tell the giver, "I can't take this for free. Let me work for it." No matter how much you try, you will never be able to pay it back.

That is what happens when we try to earn God's grace. It's a gift, not something we can pay for. The best response is gratitude and love that naturally lead to a transformed life. Imagine the heartbreak of the giver if you refuse their generous gift because you feel unworthy. That's how God feels when we refuse His grace, trying to pay Him back.

Stop trying to pay God back for His grace, just receive it with gratitude.

Let love for Christ be your motivation, not guilt or duty.

When legalism creeps in, remind yourself: Jesus did not die to make you a rule-follower, He died to make you free. Instead of asking 'Am I doing enough?', ask 'Am I trusting enough?'

Conclusion

Paul's message to the Galatians is just as crucial today as it was then. We cannot be saved by keeping the law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ.

The key takeaways from today's teaching are:

The law reveals our sin, but it cannot save us.

Grace sets us free. We no longer have to strive for righteousness.

We obey God out of love, not obligation.

Wake up each day and remind yourself: I am free in Christ. My identity is secure, not based on what I do, but on who I am in Him. Ask God to help you live in His grace, not in fear of failure. When you feel guilt or pressure to prove yourself, remind yourself that Christ already did the work for you.

Next time, we'll explore being sons and daughters of God. How do we live out our faith daily and avoid falling back into old habits? Stay tuned as we dive into Galatians 3!

