

# Made Righteous by Faith

*Key Verse: "A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."*

—**Galatians 2:16**,  
*New King James  
Version*

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Galatians 2:11-21**

foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?"—Gal. 3:1-3, *NKJV*

The Galatians received the word of justification by faith and began their spiritual journey. Now they must continue in the faith, abandoning any notion that they might be made perfect by their fleshly works. Why would

**AS NOTED IN A PRECED-**ing lesson, the fact that we cannot be justified by the works of the law is here reiterated in our Key Verse. The dear brethren in Galatia were losing sight of Christ as the basis of their faith. Many had begun to return to observance of the Mosaic Law, leaving Christ behind! Paul beseeched them saying, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—Are you so

they, or we, be tempted to justify self by works? It may be due to pride, or the mistaken thought that we can earn favor with God. It might also result from a lack of faith in the power of forgiveness through Christ's shed blood? "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."—I John 1:7-9, *NKJV*

Critics of Christianity say that it sounds too easy to claim that faith justifies. In fact, however, living the Christ life is very challenging both within and without. "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day."—Eph. 6:12,13, *NKJV*

Jesus' instructions to us are rigorous, especially those commanding love—love for God above all; love for the brethren; and love even for our enemies. (Mark 12:30; John 15:17; Matt. 5:43-45) However, mere good deeds, though important, cannot make us just, or right, in the sight of God. No amount of holding doors for others, carrying groceries for the weak, or providing transportation for the feeble will justify us in the Biblical sense.

"Rock of Ages," the majestic Christian hymn, acknowledges a great truth. We have no ability to save ourselves from sin:

"Could my tears forever flow, Could my zeal no languor know,

These for sin could not atone; Thou hast saved and thou alone.

In my hand no price I bring; Simply to thy cross I cling."

May we ever realize how blessed we are, as recipients of God's grace, to be justified by faith. ■