



Church Newsletter

First Baptist Church of
Niles

Volume 2/Issue 24

WHAT WE ARE DOING? AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME

Welcome to Volume 2 of the FBCN Newsletter or the “current new normal” editions.

This week’s message will be from Galatians 3:1-14. I encourage you to read this passage and prepare your heart for this weeks message.

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? ⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of

Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

This week Pastor Brandon Myers will continue his series on the from the book of Galatians. If you can’t join us in person I highly recommend watching his messages on one of the two FBN channels.

We invite you to Join us for a virtual prayer meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00pm.

Wednesday Bible Study ([Click Here](#))

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

One tap mobile

+13126266799

Meeting ID: 899 2251 1230

Password: 409807

Make sure you view the updated prayer list. There are so many needs. And don’t forget to restart the 30-day prayer challenge as we bring Pastor Myers and his family before God’s throne.

November 18, 2020

Grace and peace from God our Father through Jesus Christ our risen Lord brothers and sisters in Christ! And a very warm hello to every friend of First Baptist Church of Niles! You are in my prayers this week and for those of you have been away from us for a while you are dearly missed and we think of you and are lifting you up to the Lord often (Romans 1:11-12)!

This past Sunday at our Lord's Day gathering, during our sermon we began considering the glorious doctrine of justification. Throughout church history many glorious things have been written about this doctrine (see a few examples below). As we read on Sunday in Galatians 2 Paul stated clearly that for Jewish and Gentile Christians—our right standing before God happens the same way:

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ *yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.* (Galatians 2:15-16)

Remember in this 1st century early church context there were clearly false teachers who led people astray saying salvation was dependent (even a little bit) upon human work: "But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom

of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" (Acts 15:1) This was a subtle but great evil that had to be addressed head on. The Apostles dealt with the error swiftly. Sadly in our day many believe the same ancient error: that they can be righteous on their own. They think their good works will aid them in giving them a right standing before God and an entrance into heaven. Back in August of this year, Arizona Christian University conducted a study to understand the religious landscape of our country. In their interesting summary report, this line was especially disturbing: "Amazingly, a majority of people who describe themselves as Christian (52%) accept a works-oriented means to God's acceptance."¹ This ought to make us grieve brothers and sisters. We should prayerfully redouble our evangelistic and discipleship efforts never assuming the gospel or assuming that even the nicest people around us understand how one can stand right before a Holy God.

As those under the Lordship of Christ, purchased by His blood and filled with God's Holy Spirit, we must tell our friends and family the truth. We must look them in the eyes and say, "There will be a heavenly courtroom when you face God. You and me and all will stand before the judgement seat of the perfectly Holy and altogether righteous God who has seen all things (Proverbs 15:3) and we will give an account for every careless word we speak on this day of judgment (Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 12:36). How does this sit with you?"

Ask your friends boldly and regularly: "What will God declare about you? Why are you righteous and hopeful that judgment day will go well for you?" Ask and ask often and listen carefully how they answer. Friends, the verdict of a holy God over every human being on our own would be obvious: guilty. Condemned. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8). And then we must joyfully tell these lost friends of the hope that is found in Christ Jesus alone.

State clearly to those without Christ: "Friend, by God's grace alone, some of us do not fear that judgement day in the heavenly courtroom. It's not because we are better or more righteous than you. It's not because we are more moral or knowledgeable. It's not because we were born in the right family or gave a lot of time or money to charities. No the only reason we do not fear judgment day is because we know God does not lie when he declares us righteous because of Jesus and the faith we have in Him. The difference is the assurance we have as Christians in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness." When was the last time you shared this?

In koine ("common tongue" 1st century) Greek the word δικαιοσύνη (*dik-ah-yas-oo-nay*) means both "righteousness and justice". In Christ, God the just is satisfied by Christ's penalty paid for our sin and God the just counts us righteous-

¹ <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AWVI-2020->

Release-o8-Perceptions-of-Sin-and-Salvation.pdf

justified in Christ due to our faith in Him alone.

So Christian, when you start to get discouraged by your sins, your past or the remaining evil you see within, remind yourself of what God has written in His Word about justification: Justification is God declaring and counting His people righteous all because of Christ and our faith in Him. Justification is God declaring it is *“just-as-if-I-had-never-sinned”* but also *“just-as-if-I-had-always-obediently-lived.”* In Christ Jesus God takes on our sin and we are counted righteous in Him because of Christ. Law-keeping on our own was futile—even our best efforts would fall utterly short. The law drove us to seek refuge in Christ—the only perfect law-keeper and the sin-bearer.

Reformation Pastor Martin Luther put it memorably:

“We must look away from our own person. Christ and my conscience must become one, so that I can see nothing else but Christ crucified and raised from the dead for me. If I keep on looking at myself, I am gone. If we lose sight of Christ and begin to consider our past, we simply go to pieces. We must turn our eyes to the brazen serpent, Christ crucified, and believe with all our heart that He is our righteousness and our life. For Christ, on whom our eyes are fixed, in whom we live, who lives in us, is Lord over Law, sin, death, and all evil.” – Martin Luther

Christians down through the ages have celebrated this glorious doctrine of justification. It celebrates the righteousness outside of ourselves and in Christ that we receive by faith alone and the doctrine can hardly be overstated.

Consider the following as a small sampling down the ages of the importance of justification and may this doctrine never stop being central in your life.

The Epistle of Diognetus: “In whom was it possible for us, the lawless and ungodly, to be justified, except in the Son of God alone? O sweet exchange, O the incomprehensible work of God, O the unexpected blessings, that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in one righteous person, while the righteousness of one should justify many sinners! (Epistle to Diognetus, Late 1st, early 2nd century)

Martin Luther said justification *“it is the first and chief article”* and that *“this doctrine can never be discussed or taught enough. If it is lost and perishes the whole knowledge of truth, life and salvation is lost and perishes at the same time. But if it flourishes, everything good flourishes—religion, true worship, the glory of God and the right knowledge of all things and of all social conditions.”* (Lectures on Galatians 1535)

John Calvin similarly said, *“justification is the ground on which religion must be supported and warned, “unless you understand first of all your position before God, and what judgment which he passes on you, you have no foundation on which your salvation can be laid, or on which piety towards God can be reared.”*

Peter Martyr Vermigli also of the reformation era stated: *“justification is the head, the fountain, the mainstay of all religion.”*

The Hymn “Not in Me”:
*“No humble dress, no fervent prayer,
No lifted hands, no tearful song,
No recitation of the truth,
Can justify a single wrong,
My righteousness is Jesus life
My debt was paid by Jesus death
My weary load was borne by him
And he alone can give me rest.”*

Why is justification so important? Because God has said repeatedly in His Word that it is. Because God gets the glory when His justice is satisfied in Christ’s death and our sins are fully paid for by Christ. God gets glory when he counts us in His Son as righteous and when we forsake self-righteousness clinging to the work and person of Christ.

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

I look forward to seeing you Sunday God willing friends!

Soli Deo Gloria

In and for Christ,

Pastor Brandon



PRAYER LIST

- ✓ Continuing Prayers for loss: All the families that have lost loved ones this past year. Remember those who continue to lose loved ones due to COVID 19.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for physical needs: Rita McManus, Maria Hatfield, Gloria-Lynn Fernandez, Betty Matson, Ronaldo Claveria, Alex Figueroa, Kurt Pazdra II, Pastoral Intern at The Orchard.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Ministry Needs: Pastor Brandon Myers, Our Deacons, Financial support.
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for our Sister Ministries: BIEM Ministries, Orchard Church, Pastors Davis, Billow, Eddy, Vitel, Ebi and Esther Perinbaraj, Gaetano and Krista Paolino
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for Spiritual Needs: Leonard Hatfield, Carol Pelfrey's family, Daniel Ruehlman, George Bizadellis
- ✓ Continuing Prayers for: The spread of the Gospel, Our Government, Our Nation, Our Community, Our Neighbors, Our Families, Pray for our members that have lost employment and for those who still have jobs and need to interact with others on a daily basis. Lift up all our health professionals and their families who are on the front line of this pandemic especially Mylin and Errol Lardizabal and Liza Mitchell. Erwin Lickmann pray for wisdom regarding future living arrangements for Elizabeth and himself. Mikaelle (Mikey) Lardizabal at Olivet Nazarene College. George Sargis. Continue to remember the Benliro Family as they work through self isolation due to Ardi's Covid 19. The (Dewain) Karnes family as they grieve the loss of a relative to Covid 19. Pastor and Sue Vitel as they fight the effects of Covid 19.

Remember to start over the 30 days of Prayer for Pastor Myers his wife Kaiti their daughters Eva and Audrey and son Patrick. Put this on repeat for the upcoming year.

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