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## The Jesus Way | Justify

Galatians 2:15-21

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### **Reading: Galatians 2:15-21 (NLT)**

*<sup>15</sup>"You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. <sup>16</sup>Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law." <sup>17</sup>But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not! <sup>18</sup>Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down. <sup>19</sup>For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. <sup>20</sup>My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup>I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.*

### **Driver's Ed**

- Heads up, you may see a car with THIS magnetic bumper sticker on it driving around...
- STUDENT DRIVER... that's right! I'm teaching my oldest daughter to drive.
- I sit in the passenger seat and monitor what's going on, and sometimes I have to chime in: "Blinker." or "You're all clear. Go for it." or "Get over to the lane... not that one... the other... Can't you read my mind?!"
- There are definitely a LOT of laws and rules of the road
- AND there also has to be GRACE, otherwise every student driver (and licensed driver for that matter) ought to immediately turn themselves in to the

local police station for all of their violations of the law!

- "Go ahead. Lock me up! I admit it. I broke the law. I didn't signal. I didn't come to a complete stop. I drove 36 in a 35!"
- The point of being a student driver is to give it a go and learn from the teacher who's alongside you on the journey. The goal is not to never make a mistake.
- The same goes for being a disciple or follower of The Jesus Way.

### **"The buses will wait"**

- When I was 12, I attended a Billy Graham crusade on a whim and have spent the last 30 years trying to sort out what happened.
- Before that night, I can remember being a kid crying in his bed, begging God not to send me to hell.
- I had sinned. I had missed the mark. I had fallen short of the law's requirements.
- And then this old man at the metro dome started talking about how Jesus made a way for all of my sins to be forgiven, and that I was a new person!
- And I started crying different tears. Tears of relief. Tears of joy. Tears of love.
- I was never quite the same... AND I was also never quite sure...
- Because after that night I would still make mistakes trying to be good.
- And if I'm honest, sometimes I would make choices KNOWING that they weren't good.
- And I'd start to feel bad again. Like when I was a kid crying in my bed.
- In fact, I was so bad at trying to be good that to this day I'll still feel bad about feeling too good and will make myself feel more bad so I can feel less good.
- One of my favorite Tik-Tok-ers who grew up some similar theological settings as me tells this story:  
"Every Sunday in my super-fundamentalist Christian church they would do this thing called an altar call, where at the end of the service it would get really emotional and they would be like, "If you don't know beyond the shadow of a doubt, or you're not a hundred percent certain, you need to come down here and get saved."

And this shows how neurotic I am, because pretty much every week I'm like "I'm not a hundred percent." So I would go down there to get saved like a couple times a month. And at first the pastor was like, "Kevin, you got saved last week." And I would be like, "Not beyond the shadow of a doubt, Pastor Dave."

- That was absolutely me, but I'll save my stories for another sermon. (Unless?)

### "All right, then, I'll go to hell"

- Unfortunately for me, but fortunately for this sermon, I missed the key verse from this passage...

- *Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. (Gal. 2:16)*

- This is the passage that freed Martin Luther from his torturous attempt to perfectly obey the law and as an Augustinian monk.

- So he gave up, just like Paul did. And just like I did many years ago.

- In fact Luther's radical encounter with grace resonated with me so deeply that I'm about to be ordained as a Lutheran pastor.

- *For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. – (Gal. 2:19)*

### Just Drive

- Remember this bumper sticker?

- To follow the Jesus way is to journey through life with one of these on and with Jesus in the passenger seat.

- You may ask yourself, "Why isn't Jesus in the driver's seat?"

- Because out of love, Jesus won't MAKE you do anything. But people will try and make you do lots of things out of fear.

- From last week's passage from Philemon: *"I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced." (Philemon 1:14)*

- I think Jesus wants the same thing!

- You, and me, and all people are being invited through the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith to JUST

DRIVE, and in the driving Jesus will help us to become more like him by showing us his ways.

- And WHEN (not IF) we screw things up, he's there to help us get back on the road.

- The point following Jesus is to give it a go and learn from the teacher who's alongside us on the journey. The goal is not to never make a mistake.

- So let's treat ourselves and each other like we've got this bumper sticker on too.

- The Jesus way is all about Grace.

- *...So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20b)*

- PRAY