

Church

God lets his people know that they are justified through faith

Sunday School Lesson

JUSTIFIED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
(Galatians 2:15-21; Ephesians 2:1-10)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)
In last week's study God demonstrated a principle teaching to Peter; that Christ's Gospel was for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. We noted in our commentary that traditions die slowly. The laws, customs and traditions of Jewish religion were inherently being brought into Christianity as Jews became converted to Christ's discipleship.
It was a real problem for some of the early churches. It seems strange

to picture Paul publicly rebuking Peter for doing this. The overriding problems for Jewish people of the first century A.D. was accepting Christ and the Christian life, which was counter to their religious practices under the law.
In essence it amounted to faith versus works—to strive for righteousness by obeying the precepts of the law or to live the life of faith in Christ; each person would have to decide for himself.

FAITH VERSUS WORKS
(Galatians 2:15-21)
The Apostle Paul was a realist. He was also a Jew, a Pharisee and prior to his conversion, by his own admission, a chief persecutor of Christians. Before becoming a Christian he kept the law in the strictness of a Phar-

isee. So knowledgeable and reliable was Paul that when he spoke people should listen.
It is often difficult for people to accept God's free grace in the pardon of one's sin. We are prone to want to do something for it—to earn it as it were. Ingrained in our heritage and culture is the notion that one cannot get something for nothing. That is not the problem with Jewish Christians of the first century was that they wanted to mix the works principle of righteousness under the law with the faith principle of salvation which Christ instituted. I expect that many people attempt to do the same in our day. In response to others who were practicing and teaching a work plus faith gospel, Paul said, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteous-

ness came by law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Verse 21)
SAINTS KNOW LIFE IN CHRIST
(Ephesians 2:1-10)
In this part of Paul's epistle to the church at Ephesus, his emphasis is once again salvation through God's grace, not men's works. However, his attention is directed toward sinners in general and to all who were once spiritually dead but who have been quickened to life, Jews and Gentiles alike.
Paul speaks to them, and thus to us also, about the mighty working of God's power in raising Christ from the dead. He then turns to another working of divine power; that of taking sinners and converting them into saints. Paul states it this way in verse 6, "And hath raised us up to-

gether and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."
Someone may say, "I'm confused with the talk about works and grace. Doesn't God want and expect me to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and otherwise do good deeds?" Indeed, He does! He also wants us to live good moral lives; to preach and teach His Gospel, to witness for Him, to obey His commands and to attend church services, among other things.
Paul did not want people confused, to think that by doing these good works, alone, it would be sufficient for salvation and a heavenly home. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God..."
(Lesson based on the International Sunday School Lessons)

dinarily true for most everything has a price tag. We normally have to pay for, or work for, everything that we get.
But salvation through Christ is different. Through faith, believing that Jesus is the Son of God, that He was the Christ and that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for man's sins, those, who will, may be saved. The Apostle Paul said it this way, "That if thou shalt confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

COA endorses university's plan

ELIZABETH CITY—Officials at College of The Albemarle have given their endorsement to a unique plan proposed this week by C.D. Spangler, Jr., president of the University of North Carolina system, that ultimately will lead to the expansion of Elizabeth City State University's academic development.
The development plan is scheduled to be implemented next fall. One of its more salient features, according to UNC officials, is the provision for as many as 250 full scholarships for community college and high school graduates with "higher academic credentials." The incentive scholarships will be available to students from 16 northeastern North Carolina counties.
COA president Dr. Parker Chesson commended Spangler for his "bold and ambitious" academic development plan. "In conjunction with COA and the four other community and technical colleges in our area, ECSU is an important part of our educational resources in the north-east," said Chesson.
"ECSU has strived for many years to improve its academic programs, and President Spangler's initiative will afford helpful assistance to

Chancellor Jimmy Jenkins in his efforts to build a stronger regional university," the administrator said in voicing his approval of the action.
Chesson says he believes a stronger ECSU will be good for the region. "It will enhance our economic development efforts, and will complement the mission of COA and the other community and technical colleges," he said.
COA dean of student development John Simmons says he views the use scholarship program at the university as a creative use of student financial aid funds. "One immediate effect will be to give our (COA) graduates new opportunities," he said.
During the 1985-86 academic year, Simmons pointed out that 39 of the 42 students who transferred to ECSU from community colleges were COA graduates. He also emphasized the fact that their grade point averages were 3.35 out of a possible 4.0 A total of 70 COA college transfer graduates enrolled at four-year institutions.
Transferring from COA to the university was made easier last year through an articulation agreement between the two institutions. Simmons said the document clearly delineates which COA courses are


transferrable, and lists equivalent ECSU courses.
They believe the scholarship program announced this week will further enhance the university's recruitment efforts.
Both Chesson and Simmons agree that the combination of two years' education at COA, with the ECSU scholarship, will make the possibility of earning a four-year degree a reality for many more area residents. The community college traditionally enrolls approximately 1,500 curriculum students during its nine-month academic year with the advantage of low tuition costs (\$198) and small class sizes.
Chesson says he sees no unnecessary duplication or overlapping of missions between the two institutions. "A strong ECSU and a strong COA will help the region," the administrator said.

Area church news

The First Baptist Church Sunday School starts at 9:45 a.m. with Superintendent R.B. Gibbs in charge. Morning worship starts at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor J.H. London preaching from the subject "Living a Godly

Life In An Ungodly World" Titus 2:12. The young adult choir will be singing under the direction of Mr. Donald McClain, Organist.
You are invited to join us and bring a friend.

Dear friends,



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James S. Dear

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FFA day set at Farm Show

RALEIGH, NC—A tractor and truck driving competition, a barbecue luncheon and the opportunity to view hundreds of pieces of farm equipment and supplies will highlight the annual Future Farmers of America Day Feb. 5 at the Southern Farm Show.
The 11th annual show will be held Wednesday, Feb. 4 through Friday, Feb. 6. Thursday of the show has been an important part of the annual plans of FFA chapters across the state. More than 1,000 members representing more than 60 chapters are expected to attend.
"It gives the FFA members the chance to see the various exhibits and learn about the equipment and materials on display," says Doug Powell of the Agriculture Education Division of the N.C. Dept of Public Instruction, which coordinated the day. "It gives them a chance to learn more about agriculture and where they might fit in down the road. They also have the chance to meet FFA members from across the state."
The Tractor and Truck Driving competitions are held on the floor of the Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr. Horse Complex. Orientation is held from 10:30 to 11 a.m., with the competitions beginning at 11 and running until about 4 p.m. Each entrant runs his vehicle on an obstacle course and judged on skill and safety.
The tractor to be used will be a 30-

40 horsepower Kubota (L-series), and the truck will be a Dodge Ram D-50 Pick-up from Al Smith Dodge in Raleigh.
"This is something these kids look forward to each year," Powell said. They're judged on their knowledge of the operation of the vehicle, their skill in handling it and the safety skills they exhibit. Plus, in the truck driving competition, a State Highway Patrol officer rides with them as an observer. That helps the students develop respect for law enforcement."
Approximately 50 students will participate in each competition. Each receives a memento award, and the top three in each receives plaques.
The luncheon will be held from 11:30 to 1:30. Cost is \$4.50 per person. Admission to the show is free to everyone—students, farmers and agribusiness people.
Some 300 exhibits will be included in two buildings and in outside areas at the Fairgrounds, offering farmers the opportunity to shop and compare equipment, supplies and services for the coming year.
Show hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, and 9 to 4 Friday.
For more information, contact Southern Shows at 800-532-0189 (N.C.); 800-334-0248 (U.S. or 704-376-6594 in Charlotte).

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'IF I WERE THE DEVIL'

Pastor Daniel E. LeRoy
Bagley Swamp Wesleyan Church
Hertford, N.C.

Have you ever noticed that the devil rarely tells you a big fat lie? Usually he takes something that's true and pushes it just enough one way or the other to make it false but it still makes enough sense that we believe it or accept it or think, "Well, maybe that could be all right."
If I were the devil, I'd keep right on with that strategy. I would tell you that if God really loved you, He wouldn't let anything bad ever happen to you. No hunger, no pain, no death, no tragedy. And if you wouldn't believe that, then I would tell you that to be a real Christian, you have to suffer all the time. You should always experience physical discomfort, abject poverty, emotional upheaval. In fact, you should become a hermit (or a missionary?).
If I were the devil, I would tell you that you should gratify all your desires now! God gave them to you and it is bad for your health to wait. Discipline is dangerous and for weaker people. If it feels good, do it! If it takes time or effort, forget it! But you're too smart to fall for that, right? So I would tell you to never expect another pleasant or pleasurable thing to happen to you since you are a Christian now. After all, doesn't TV teach us that pleasure only comes through illicit behavior?
Also, if I were the devil, I would tell you that God is busy, real busy. He can't be bothered with your doctor's report, your math test or your empty cupboard — and especially not your temptations. But some of you know God better than that, so to you I would say that God is the eternal biology student, always dissecting you into little pieces, looking for traces of sin. And finding it with glee!
And if I were the devil, I would try to convince you that popularity — power with people — is the sure cure for all your problems. You are liked by people at any cost, and you have it made. Now some of you just won't buy that, so to you I would say that to be a real Christian, you gotta drive 'em crazy until they hate you! You can't have friends in this world, bud, 'cause you might get contaminated or something."
Then there's the thing about forgiveness. If I were the devil, I would try to get you to believe — and practice — that if you're really a Christian you can do anything you want to do. God will forgive you. But some of you are too pessimistic to believe that. So I would tell you that God doesn't forgive anybody unless they deserve it!

And if I were the devil, I would tell you to measure everything by appearances. Big buildings, big numbers, big money, big cars, big homes has to mean big blessings from God. Of course, there are some of you who would never buy that. So then I would tell you to measure everything by its "smallness" (that would fit your spirit better). Big buildings, big numbers, big money, big cars, big homes can only mean one thing: **BIG SINNERS!**
To the visionary among us, if I were the devil, I would encourage you to attempt the impossible now! It will honor God... if you can pull it off! And to the timid I would say that if you're going to be a Christian and do something for the Lord, don't get into any big hurry about it. After all, God — and the work — will always be there tomorrow.
A couple of other things I would tell you are that shortcuts are all right, as long as you end up where you're supposed to be. Sell out and get what you came for. If you were too smart to believe that, then I would tell you that the more details you can possibly add, the more things you can possibly do, the more extra-curricular activities you can possibly be involved in, the more stuff you can volunteer for (even at the expense of time with your family), the holier you will be.
The clincher is this. If I were the devil, I would tell you that your "feelings" are the basis of your relationship with God. If you feel good then God must be close by. But if you feel bad... God must have packed up and left! Now enough of you are spiritually mature that you know better. So to you I would say that if hell is hot then heaven — which is the opposite of hell, right? — must be an icebox. So the colder your heart is, the closer you must be to heaven!
Well, I'm not the devil. And I have some Good News! God loves us all — personally, actively, realistically, meaningfully. As Kierkegaard said, "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us to love." And He has wonderful plans for us — a special plan for each of us. He has sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins and to keep us in fellowship with Himself. And when the devil is actively working against us, God is there — protecting us, comforting us, setting the limits on Satan's activities, and bring glory to Himself through our victory! "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).


Bookmobile schedule

The Perquimans County Bookmobile Schedule for Feb. 6, 1987 is as follows:
Cherry Day Care, 9:45; Wynne Fork Court, 10:15-10:45; Holiday Island Club House, 11:00-12:30; Snug Harbor, 1:00-2:00; George's Store, 2:15-2:45; Kirby Drive, 3:00; Gladys Warren, 3:15 and Gertrude Boyce Drive, 3:30.

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