



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Galatians 2:15-21

Seeking to be Justified in Christ

Bible Reading: Galatians 2:15-21

“¹⁵ We are Jews by birth & not “Gentile sinners,” ¹⁶ & yet because we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ & not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified. ¹⁷ But if we ourselves are also found to be “sinners” while seeking to be justified by Christ, is Christ then a promoter of sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸ If I rebuild those things that I tore down, I show myself to be a lawbreaker. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ, & 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 & gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.” (Galatians 2:15-21)

1. **The Old Covenant Replaced by the New** (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; Gal. 3:24a, 25)

- “For a first-century Jew, “it would be virtually impossible to conceive of participation in God’s covenant...apart from ...those works of the law.” [James Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & Law*, p. 193]

2. **Context: the ‘Antioch Incident’** (Gal. 2:11-14)

a. Peter’s withdrawal split the Antioch church

- “It was [Paul’s] experiences at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) & Antioch (Gal. 2:11- 14) that shaped Paul’s theology & give rise to the important statements of Gal. 2:15- 21...At Antioch (Gal 2:11-14), Paul observed a unified worship of both Jewish and gentile Christians interrupted catastrophically when a group from Jerusalem, representing themselves as a party from James, the brother of Jesus, arrived in

Antioch & led the Jewish Christians, including Barnabas (a former ally of Paul's gospel), away from such unity. The result, a horror to Paul, was a momentous rift of the Christian fellowship in Antioch: a gentile Christian Church & a form of Christian Judaism. So serious was Paul that he publicly confronted Peter & set out a rationale for his rebuke, expressed briskly in Gal. 2:15-21: if Peter understood the... consequences of salvation at the end of history in Jesus Christ then he would not withdraw into a Christian Judaism but would instead nurture a unified Christian Church. As a result of these... experiences Paul learned the weight certain identifiable [Law-] practices could shoulder; in particular, Paul saw how much significance Jews could attribute to circumcision, purity, food laws [& meal segregation]." [Scot McKnight, "Ego & "I": Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective," Word & World, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) pp. 275-276]

b. Paul vs. Peter—Confrontation between *Jewish* Christians

- a. Gal. 2:15-21 "divides into two [sections]: (1) a common Jewish-Christian experience (Gal. 2:15-16) & (2) the implications of that common experience (Gal. 2:17-21)...[Yet,] few interpreters...note...the logic of Paul's argument. What is fundamental to this unit is that both Paul & Peter had a common Jewish Christian experience in their conversion...It is the "we" of Gal. 2:15-16 that shapes the argument: it was *because they were Jews* that Paul has a ground to criticize Peter's own practices at Antioch. It is the "we" who are "Jews" (Gal. 2:15) who "know that a person is justified not by the works of the Law but [or but only] through faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16). It was the Jewish Christians who perceived this connection. At this point Paul is speaking of an experience in common to Jewish converts to Jesus Messiah *rather than* of an experience typical of gentile Christians." [Scot McKnight, "Ego & "I": Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective," Word & World, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) p. 276]

c. **Justified: Made Right with God Through Christ** (Gal. 2:16)

a. Justified not by 'works of the Law, but by faith in Christ'

- "A person is *not justified* by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ & not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified." (Gal. 2:16) **Note:** 'justified' (Gk. *dikaioo*, to declare righteous; passive 3x) "The passive indicates that one does not justify [her/himself, but is declared righteous by another [i.e., God]" (Rienecker)
- "Justification 'not by works of Law' is Paul's way of saying that *right standing before God* is not by means of Torah [Law], but by exclusive faith in Jesus Christ...Justification 'not by the works of the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ' proposes one viable option namely faith in Christ..." [Jarvis J. Williams, *Galatians*, p. 103 & #82]

b. 'Works of Law' in Gal. 2—Jewish-Gentile boundaries—e.g. circumcision, diet, company at meals

- "'Works of the Law' are defined not so much by the motive of earning sufficient merit before God but are seen as badges of identity & Torah practices that erect *boundaries between Jews & Gentiles*. In other words, 'works of the Law' focus on those practices of Jews that give them that special identity; but Paul received an inclusive gospel [for all humanity, including Gentiles], & this forced [Paul to conclude that boundary-marking] 'works of the Law' to be contrary to God's will." [Scot McKnight, "Ego & "I": Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective," Word & World, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) p. 275]

c. Heritage is not able to make us right with God – ethnicity, family, good/moral person, social standing, etc.

- "[Paul] points out that even those who were born Jews & are thus not 'Gentile sinners,' as Jews liked to call them – even such Jews have realized, when they became Christians, that there is no hope for Jews as Jews of getting right with God. By becoming Christians they acknowledged that their Jewish heritage, including the law, was not sufficient." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, Marianne M. Thompson, *Introducing the NT: It's Literature & Theology*, p. 363]

d. Only abandoning all & trusting in Christ is sufficient

- "Paul is...pointing to the crux of what Christians really are: those who have realized that their only hope for a right relationship with God lies in abandoning trust in their Jewish heritage & seeking that relationship with God through Christ. When Jewish Christians did that, they had, in fact, abandoned the heritage that had marked them as Jews." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, Marianne M. Thompson, *Introducing the NT: It's Literature & Theology*, p. 363]

e. We enter a relationship with God

- "Although the term 'justification' has a legal context...being put in the right...the heart of the matter is relational. It's about being restored to a right relationship to God, simply because of the [gracious] goodness of God..." [C. Mostert, "Salvation's Setting," in I. Davidson, M. Rae (eds.) *God of Salvation*, p 129]

f. Justification: Yesterday, Today & Forever

- "The point about justification is that what God says of Jesus the Messiah, he says of all those who belong to the Messiah [Christ]. He said it yesterday, when Jesus died & rose again. He says it today, in & through Jesus who ever lives to make intercession for us. And he will say it tomorrow, when Jesus returns to judge & save, to complete his kingdom work on earth as in heaven. So the [1.] first point is that justification is anchored &

rooted firmly in Jesus himself. The second point [2.]...is the triple tense of justification. Justification has...three tenses in Paul's writing. He can speak of past justification; he can speak of it as a present reality; & he can speak of it as still in some sense future. He can do all 3 in close proximity. This is not carelessness. He thinks [of the End-time]: God has acted in Jesus the Messiah, he is at work presently affirming that all who believe are justified & so giving them assurance, & he will act through Jesus when he comes again in glory."
[N.T.Wright, "JUSTIFICATION: YESTERDAY, TODAY, & FOREVER," JETS, Vol. 54.1 (2011) pp 49-50]

d. 'Seeking' to be Justified (Gal. 2:17) – [i.e., following Christ in my daily life]

- "...while seeking [*present tense*] to be justified in Christ..." (Gal. 2:17)
- "Some [scholars] see in ?????????? ?????????? [‘seeking to be justified’] a reference to *ongoing Christian existence* in a broader sense, *emphasizing the ‘new lifestyle’ of believers*. This would give ?????????? [‘to be justified’] a future reference here." [John W. Taylor, "...*Argumentation in Gal. 2:17-18*," Bulletin for Biblical Research, Vol. 4, p. 550]
- In Paul's "new relationship with God he finds amazing new freedom to live a life devoted to God. Thus Paul is always *seeking to live in a way that pleases God* [to be justified], yet not at all depending on his own actions for justification." ESV
- "Our present state of justification...leaves a dimension to be filled out in the future...A few statements of Paul speak of justification as...an accomplished fact for believers (Rom, 5:1, 9; 1 Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:7 [etc.]). That *full justification lies in the future* is indicated by a good number of other passages in Paul's epistles...[In] 2:17 those who have believed are still 'seeking to be justified in Christ' (Gal. 2:17). *The present participle of a verb of aspiration indicates a pursuit which has yet to reach its goal.*" [Paul A. Rainbow, *Way of Salvation*, pp. 157-8]
- "In Gal. 2:17 [Paul] speaks of being 'justified *in Christ*' & in Gal. 2:20 he writes 'Christ lives in me'. These phrases suggest that *justification entails participation 'in Christ.'* Christ dwells in the believer & the believer is transferred to the realm of Christ. In effect, believers are justified through (Gk. *dia*) and on the basis of (Gk. *ek*) Christ's faith [faithfulness]; they are *justified by participation in the faith* [faithfulness] of Jesus Christ." [Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, 100]
- "The significance of Paul's stand should not be underestimated. For the first time, probably, he had come to see that the principle of 'justification through faith' applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also *to the whole of the believer's life*...[Paul] saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God's covenant promises...*it must also regulate his life as a believer.*" [J. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & Law*, pp. 158-9]

a. The Christ-follower's new life: 'seeking to be justified' – we're already right with God, so we continue seeking to live it out

- "It is important that Paul speaks about the life of the Christ-follower even after the initial act of trusting as a life of 'seeking to be justified'...[W]hen Paul speaks of being [justified] 'on the basis of trusting Christ,' he understands that...to involve not just an initial act of belief but the process of being transformed into a righteous person that Christ opens up for the one who trusts." [David DeSilva, *Galatians*, NICNT, p. 243]

b. 'Justification' applies to the whole of the Believer's life (Gal. 2:16-17)

- "*We have believed into Christ Jesus...to be justified by faith...[Now] we...are...seeking to be justified in Christ*" (2:16-17)
- "The significance of Paul's stand should not be underestimated. For the first time, probably, he had come to see that the principle of 'justification through faith' applied *not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer's life*...[Paul] saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God's covenant promises...*it must also regulate his life as a believer.*" [J Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & Law*, pp 158-9]

c. Colliding with the law (our heritage?) – Peter lived out his new freedom in Christ that allowed him to eat with Gentiles (at Cornelius' house – Acts 10 & in Antioch – Gal. 2:12). Then, someone reminded him of his heritage (what you're doing is 'sinful,' yet he was following Christ). That was the collision point! [Amish – "I'm not supposed to do this! This makes me a 'sinner'." And yet they are following Christ]

d. Christ is not leading us into sin (Gal. 2:17b)

- "Paul...accepts that following Jesus...led him & his fellow Jewish Christians to be no different from [Gentile] 'sinners,'... who are following Jesus. They might indeed be 'sinners' according to Torah's norms, but, Paul claims, that does not make Christ the servant of sin, since Torah [Law], taken as a whole, no longer defines sin." [D. DeSilva, *Galatians*, p. 243]
- "Eating with redeemed & sanctified Gentiles does not show that Christ is advancing sin's agenda, but that the old lines that defined 'sinner' & 'not sinner' have been redrawn...Jewish Christians are

following God's lead by observing these new " [D. DeSilva, *Galatians*, NICNT, p. 243]

e. Misinterpretations & Misapplications of Gal. 2:17

a. It addresses questions like: "What if I sin after being saved?" "What if I sin while seeking to be justified?"

- That's not the issue here; other Scriptures are relevant: "Commenting on 1 John 1:8–2:2, Jerome argues against [sinless] perfectionism in the Christian life by appealing to...Christ's ongoing...intercession:... 'John confesses himself a sinner (in 1 John 1:8–2:2) & hopes for the forgiveness of sins after baptism But that we may not utterly despair & think that if we sin after baptism we cannot be saved, [John] immediately [adds] 'if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one...' (1 Jn. 2:1-2)." [Bruce L. McCormack, *Justification in...*, p. 47]

b. Paul responds to the charge that neglecting the Law leads to lawlessness (Rom. 6:15-23; 7:6)

- Interpreters "often see Paul's question, '*Is Christ then an agent of sin?*' (2:17)...as a charge made by Paul's opponents that Christ causes Jewish Christians to sin if they set aside the Law...They conclude that Gal. 2:18 refutes the charge. [Responding to] the question '*Is Christ then an agent of sin?*' Paul argues 'If after we come to Christ we are found sinners, is that the fault of Christ?...[No.] *I make myself a sinner* & Christ isn't responsible for that,' [I am!]." [Debbie Hunn, "*Christ versus the Law: Issues in Gal. 2:17-18*," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 72, #3 (July 2010) p. 537] But, the context here is not (general) lawlessness & "sin" here is not the violation of moral laws. "Sinner" here refers to the status of Gentiles (as viewed by Jews) & "sin" here is Jewish believers having meal-fellowship with Gentile believers.
- Paul responds to that accusation— that neglecting the Law leads to lawlessness—in Rom. 6 "What then? *Should we sin because we are not under the Law* but under grace? Absolutely not!..." (Rom. 6:15-23) That's not the issue here!
- Paul's answer—we're guided by the Spirit, not the Law: "But now we've been released from the Law, since we've died to what held us, so that we may *serve in the newness of the Spirit & not* in the old letter of the Law." (Rom. 7:6)

c. Describes the failure of works-based righteousness—"While seeking to be justified, we...are...found to be sinners" (2:17)

- "It was an admission on the part of Jewish Christians that justification by works *proves* that they are sinners. Their failure in keeping the law forces them to admit their sinful condition. They did not find righteousness in keeping the law." –Grant Richardson (Jan. 13, 2000) **Note:** Here the context is "seeking to be justified *in Christ*," not by works
- Not Paul's experience: "It's [a] common stereotype to say that Saul was converted because he *could not follow the law & that he finally realized* that he could only be saved by grace. But that theory has *no basis in fact*. Paul himself states that as to righteousness, he was blameless under the law (Phil. 3:6). Paul could follow the Law to the letter. We should *give up that thought*...But suddenly Jesus himself confronted Saul on the Damascus road [Gal. 1:16]." [Elizabeth R. Achtemeier, *Preaching & Reading the OT Lessons*, p. 120]
- "Our understanding of Paul's conversion & the place of guilt in the scheme of salvation need to be revised. It was *not Paul's inability to perform the Law* that led to his conversion." [Robert Jewett, *Paul...Apostle to America*, p. 89]
- Paul "does *not* characterize his identity as...a *desperate sinner unable to keep the Law*. He had kept the entire Law (Gal.5:3), not just those parts that were Jewish identity markers." [V. Rabens, in M. Bird, *God & Faithfulness of Paul*, p. 560]
- "Paul knew that, far from failing, he was blameless under the Law (Phil. 3:6) & able to establish a righteousness of his own (Rom. 10:3). In *denying he was a sinner* he demonstrated how Sin can misuse the Law...Paul *in retrospect* condemns his...zeal for the Law, for...now [he is] one...having been justified." [D. Platte, *Engaging Augustine*, p. 112]

e. **Living in Open Defiance of God** (Gal. 2:18) – adhering to anything that divides God's people defies him, nullifies his accomplishments in Christ, & rejects his purpose for all nations in Christ.

a. Peter's re-erecting Jewish-Gentile barriers makes him a 'law-breaker' (Gal. 2:18)

- "One way or another, someone who builds up what he formerly demolished acknowledges his fault, explicitly in his former demolition or...in his present rebuilding. If...one activity was right, the other must be wrong." [FF. Bruce, *Galatians*, 142]
- "Peter's act of re-erecting boundaries between Jews & gentiles on the basis of "works of the law" is, in a total about-face, demonstrably sinful itself (2:18). Thus, if a Jew finds that justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ for anyone and everyone...then to revert to "works of the law" as boundary markers between Jews & gentiles is to "build up again the very things that I once tore down" & so to force oneself into the category of "transgressor." [Scot McKnight, "*Ego & 'I': Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective*," *Word & World*, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) p. 277]

b. Insisting on things that divide Christians

- "Insisting on works of the Torah meant trying to re-erect the 'dividing wall of hostility' at a time when God had torn it down in Christ...(Gal. 2:18; Eph. 2:11-16), thus acting in open defiance of God." [D. DeSilva, *Galatians*, NICNT, p. 227]

c. Rejecting & nullifying God's work (Gal. 2:21)

- “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.” (Gal. 2:21)
- “Paul believes that...align[ing] with the Torah would nullify what God has accomplished in his [& our] life by means of Jesus’ death on his behalf & be a rejection of God’s purposes for all the nations in Christ.” [D. DeSilva, *Galatians*, p. 245]

f. **Dead to the Law; Living to God** (Gal. 2:19)

- “Through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might *live to God*” (Gal. 2:19)

a. The particular *Jewish-Christian* context

- “The text [Gal. 2:19] is *not about the gentile Christian experience with the Torah [Moses’ Law]*—for they do not, in fact, die to the Torah. They don’t know the Torah. Indeed, *it is a particularly Jewish experience to die to the Torah [Law] and it [Gal. 2:18-21 represents]...the peculiar, if also foundational, experience of Jewish Christians like Peter & Paul in coming to terms with faith in Christ...The autobiographical...Paul is somewhat included... [with] Paul...now [a] representative Jewish convert to Jesus Messiah...The real issue [in Gal. 2:11-21] is the attempt to erect national privilege as boundary between Jews & Gentiles. Paul died to that law, & he here urges Peter to die with him in Christ’s death.*” [Scot McKnight, “*Ego & “I”*:Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective,” *Word & World*, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) pp. 279-80]

b. Peter, like Paul, should ‘die to the Law’ in order to ‘live to God’ (Gal. 2:19)

- “Paul uses his own experience in Gal 2:19 [‘I died to the Law’]...to force Peter to see that Paul’s experience ought to be Peter’s. Since Paul died to the law, *so also ought Peter to die to the law and engage in table fellowship* with all those who have faith in the Son of God...[This course of action contrasts starkly with] Peter’s attempt to re-erect the boundaries between Jews & gentiles, the attempt to ‘judaize’ the gentiles (Gal. 2:14)...The real issue is the attempt to erect national privilege as boundary between Jews & Gentiles. Paul died to that law, & he here urges Peter to die with him in Christ’s death” [Scot McKnight, “*Ego & “I”*:Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective,” *Word & World*, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) pp. 279-80]

c. Dead to the Law because of our union with the death of Christ

- “The assertion ‘...I died to the Law, *in order that* I might live to God’ (Gal. 2:19)...would have outraged Paul’s Jewish contemporaries.” [P. Oakes, *Rethinking Galatians*, p.] **Note:** For devout Jews ‘living to God’ equals living by Torah [Law]
- “In Galatians...the death of Jesus...meant *not only Jesus’ death under the Law, but also that of all who share his destiny by faith.* The believer, like the crucified and resurrected Jesus, is therefore no longer under its [i.e., the Law’s] power. Living in union with the risen Christ, the believer lives in a new era, the old [era/age] has passed way.” [Arland J. Hultgren, in G. E. Giltshvedt, *Dying & Deliverance*, x]
- **Note:** *thro’ law*, Paul has *died to law* so the law can place no demands on him. Paul died to the law, he says, *that I might live to God.* He gained God’s approval through justification that’s in Christ & in this new relationship with God he finds amazing new freedom to live a life devoted to God. Thus Paul is always *seeking to live in a way that pleases God*, yet not at all depending on his own actions for justification...” ESV

d. Living to/for God—“...I died to the Law, so that I might *live to God*” (Gal. 2:19)

- Does “this text has any relevance then for the *gentile* Christian? Does the gentile Christian have an “Ego” which needs to die to the law? In specific terms, ‘no;’ in general terms, ‘yes.’ Let me explain. It’s a fact that gentile Christians were not tempted to withdraw from table fellowship either to please the Jerusalem authorities or to maintain the boundaries of ‘works of the law.’ However, inasmuch as Paul’s attack is against anyone who contaminates the gospel by re-erecting national or ethnic boundaries, or who [undermines] the sufficiency of Christ as ground of acceptance with God or the adequacy of the Holy Spirit as guide for Christian behavior, the *gentile [Christian] needs to die to that kind of ‘law’.*” [Scot McKnight, “*Ego & “I”*:Gal. 2:19 in New Perspective,” *Word & World*, Vol. XX, #3 (2000) p. 279]
- “[In Gal. 2:19-20] Paul offers a personal statement...of the rationale for why that which was torn down (Gal. 2:17-18) should not be erected afresh...Paul describes a paradigmatic ‘dying’ that opens up the possibility of a new kind of ‘living,’ all the results of Jesus’ own dying for the sake of, out of love for, & in order to benefit Paul – & it is significant that, while Christ did this for ‘all’ (2 Cor. 5:14-15), he also did it for ‘each,’ & thus for ‘me’ (Gal. 2:20).” [D. DeSilva, *Galatians*, p. 245]
 - a. Maturely acknowledge that God can lead people in different ways
 - b. Cultivate your relationship with God through spiritual practices

3. Appendix: What’s the Center of Paul’s Theology?

a. What’s the Center?

- “Is the center of Paul’s theology ‘justification by faith’...? Or should the central feature be found in a ‘participation in Christ’? ...In fact, the study of *participation in Christ leads more directly* into the rest of Paul’s theology than justification.” [James Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, pp. 20, 395]

- “The ‘traditional...’Lutheran’ perspective [sees] Paul *stressing* the individual’s *justification* (right relationship with God) by faith rather than ‘works;’ justification as a divine...acquittal, as in a law court, [etc.]...[For] the ‘New Perspective on Paul’ *the center of Paul’s theology was not justification but participation in Christ*...Richard Hays...argues that *Paul’s gospel centers*, not on human faith, but on *the...faithfulness of Jesus*.” [Michael Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, pp. 2-3]

b. “Justification is not the ‘Center’ of Paul’s theology”—D. A. Carson

- “We are led to conclude *that justification is not the ‘center’ of Paul’s theology* in the sense that it is dominant, all-embracing or the underlying principle of coherence by which the other themes are interlocked. [D. A. Carson, *Right with God: Justification...*, p. 84]
- “We can *neither regard justification by faith as the center of Paul’s theology* nor be confident that it is original to his evangelistic [proclamation]. At the same time, the claim that justification by faith is peripheral...is contradicted by the evidence...” [G. P. Anderson, *Paul’s New Perspective*, 131]

c. Participation in Christ as the Center—“*in Christ/with Christ*”

- “...We ourselves have *believed into* [Gk. *eis*] *Christ Jesus*...so that we might be justified by faith...” (Gal. 2:16)
- “...We...are...seeking to be justified *in Christ*” (Gal. 2:17)
- “In Gal. 2:17 [Paul] speaks of being ‘justified *in Christ*’[This] phrase suggest[s] that *justification entails participation ‘in Christ*.’ Christ dwells in the believer & the believer is transferred to the realm of Christ. In effect, believers are...*justified by participation in the faith of Jesus Christ*.” [Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, 100]
- “Contrary to the traditional ‘Lutheran’ interpretation, *justification is not the center* of Paul’s [theology]; *rather*, ‘the central and integrative fulcrum’...of Pauline [theology] is *union with Christ*” [G. P. Anderson, *Paul’s New Perspective*, 384]
- “For those like [N. T.] Wright who argue that *justification is not Paul’s theological center* but...Jesus & the gospel is—that place [the center] is reserved for ‘*participation in Christ*.’” [Daniel W. Roberts, *Pastoral Epistles &...New Perspective*, p. 2]
- “Many of the [experiential] consequences...of [justification]...are hard to derive from the doctrine of justification. For e.g., [the fact that] the Christian is transformed into a new being; his/her faith is characterized by personal experience of the presence of Christ & the Spirit; he/she is set free from the power of Sin...to live worthy of his/her calling; he/she belongs to a community of [God’s people]...These claims are unrelated to justification...However, if *participation in Christ is...the center*, all of them emerge...*Participation in Christ & the Spirit is a much more important & central category in Galatians ... Justification by faith is not the center of Paul’s theology*.” [Karl Kuula, *Law, Covenant, & God’s Plan*, 2, pp. 76-78, 82]
- “The notion that salvation and life occur in some sense ‘*in Christ*’ is a *central theme* in Paul. If not the ‘center’ of Paul’s theology, then perhaps it’s ‘*the webbing that holds it all together*.’” [Samuel D. Ferguson, *Spirit & Relational...*, pp. 111-2]