

Session 1: What is the Gospel?

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Galatians 2:15-16.
- B. We have the misconception that the gospel is for the unsaved, but it's not. (Isaiah 53:6)
- C. We must learn to preach the gospel to ourselves as Christians.
- D. We are justified not by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus. Justification means that God counts us as righteous in His sight.

II. We are counted as righteous by God not by works of the law.

- A. Our performance and our obedience cannot save us because they cannot achieve perfection. (Galatians 3:10; Isaiah 64:6)

III. We are counted righteous through faith in Christ.

- A. This means we must renounce any confidence in ourselves or self-reliance.
- B. We must rely on Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - 1. Jesus is sinless. (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5; John 8:46; John 8:29; Matthew 13:55)
 - 2. Jesus bears our sin. (Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - 3. Jesus' righteousness covers us, which we must revisit every day. (Galatians 2)
- C. Justification can be thought of as "just as if I had never sinned" and "just as if I had always obeyed."
 - 1. We have a default setting toward performance, but we have to fight this tendency.
 - 2. Jesus took all of our sin. (Colossians 2:13)
 - 3. Jesus' righteousness gets transferred to us and God is with us as we learn to be more righteous. (Matthew 8:23-27)
 - 4. Justification is not only a past event, but a present reality. Because of this, God's blessings and favor does not rest on our performance, but on Jesus' righteousness. (Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:20)

Application questions:

1. What does it mean to “preach the gospel to ourselves” on a daily basis?

2. Why is it important to recognize that Jesus not only paid for our sin but gave us righteousness? What’s the difference between seeing your ledger as empty of sin and seeing it as full of righteousness?

3. How can we recognize when we are relying on performing to earn God’s favor? What are some of the signs of a performance driven relationship with God?
