

# MAKING THE PLAYOFFS DOESN'T MAKE YOU A CHAMP

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## Review:

- Paul has been campaigning hard for the TRUE Gospel or the good news that even though we are ALL sinners, meaning that we ALL disobey God on a regular basis, Jesus paid the price for our transgressions.
- Paul called Peter out for being a cowardly hypocrite. Peter had celebrated the freedom under Christ that anyone could be saved and was sitting and eating with Gentiles, before the circumcision group pressured him. And gives in to the circumcision group.
- Not only is Peter wrong by doing this, but as a leader, other people are following his lead.
- The circumcision group thought that if you wanted to be saved, you must believe in Jesus, but also follow the Jewish laws and rituals.
- Paul tells Peter, "Dude, you've been a Jew your whole life and can't follow all the laws and you expect Gentiles to be able to do it?"
- Don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying that abiding by dietary laws or purity laws is wrong. If you want to be a vegetarian or you are anti-bacon, that's fine, but don't tell someone else that they have to do the same in order to be saved.

## PRAY

### Galatians 2:15-16

*We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 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.*

What he's saying is pretty profound. The Jews had a moral advantage over the Gentiles; they had the Law, the prophets, the covenant. If anyone could claim the moral advantage card it was the Jews.

But Paul's argument is "WHO CARES?" It doesn't matter that they had the Law since the beginning because obeying the law doesn't save you.

Maybe you grew up in a Christian home maybe you had parents who supported you, taught you, prayed over you, took you to AWANA or youth group?

Or maybe you were neglected, abandoned, abused?

We all have different stories of our upbringing, but here's Paul's point:

When it comes to justification before God, any moral advantage you had at birth does nothing for your standing with God.

**Matt Chandler:**

"So if your dad was a deacon and your mom was a Sunday School teacher and she gave birth to you on Communion Sunday in the baptismal, and you've spent your whole life in church, reading your Bible, you've never been drunk or done drugs, and you were a virgin when you got married, you only watch PG movies...

When it comes to justification, you are no better off than the man who has no idea who his father is, who's mom gave birth to him in a bar, on the bar, knocking over a bottle of Jack, who has grown up knowing nothing but drunken debauchery and promiscuity, who cusses like a sailor, and has lived in every deplorable way imaginable..."

Paul just said to be moral has no more advantage over the immoral, both need a savior, neither one can justify themselves, neither one can save themselves with their behavior

Get over yourself, because your good works won't save you! Even if you have spent your whole life at church and you had earned every **AWANA** badge imaginable and you look like General Patton.

I was late getting started in AWANA so I was working it to earn awards. They are plastic jewels. But they represent achievement.

PS5 Trophies are what drives me to play video games

All those awards, your good behavior, **none of that makes you better than the dude that has none of that.** None of that justifies the fact that you are a sinner.

Don't misunderstand my point, there are advantages to growing up in a Godly home, they just don't apply to salvation. If you did those things and think I'm saying there's no benefit, that's not what I'm saying. But nothing we do as parents saves our kids.

**Matt Chandler**

"The best a parent can do is gather kindling around their kid and hope that the Spirit of God ignites it"

Many kids "believe in God" because their parents told them to. But that's not what we want, we want the Holy Spirit to open up our kids' souls so that they would own their faith.

My brothers loved my passion for baseball, not the game itself. Not until later when they developed a love on their own. Unfortunately for them it was the Astros and the Angels.

My kids are not saved because their dad was a youth pastor or because they grew up in church.

### **Galatians 2:17**

*But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.*

What does he mean "Is Christ a servant of sin?"

2 Corinthians 3 says that Moses is a minister of sin, meaning when the law enters the scene, we now know that we are sinners.

Can you imagine what it was like when Moses brought the law down the mountain the first time? Do not worship other gods, do not covet, etc...GULP!

The rules show us how far we are from God, we call it sin. This is why Moses is a minister of sin.

If Christ has come just with more rules then He has not brought righteousness and life, but more sin, more condemnation and ultimately more death. Christ didn't come to bring new rules, he came to declare that He is the fulfillment; He is the righteousness we need. He's not building back up what He just ripped down. He's not saying "I'm here to fulfill the Law and now here's more Laws. Since you couldn't keep it the first time, I've got some weaker ones."

Paul is making the point, that if you make Jesus a bringer of rules, you make Him a minister of sin, condemnation, and death.

The other difference between Jesus and the Law is that the Law creates space between you and God, Jesus fills that space so that we can commune with God like we are today.

### **Galatians 2:19**

*For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.*

Let me try to explain how the Law trumps the Law:

**Dark Tag rules:** have fun, be safe. Those are both rules, (let's call them laws) but the be safe law trumps the have fun law.

OT Law diagnoses Paul's condition as a sinner. His attempts to follow the law had been an exercise in futility---because even the most religiously perfect people are sinners and in need of a savior. That realization helped Paul see that only by grace through Christ could he know forgiveness. And when he discovered grace was his only hope for salvation, he stopped relying on the law--in a sense, dying to the law.

Last week was the Super Bowl, what a boring game. The lack of offense was killing me. But sometimes even the team with the most offensive yards, doesn't necessarily win the game. Its the team that scores the most points.

Same is true in baseball, it doesn't matter if the other team has more hits, less walks, more strikeouts, the only thing that matters when the final pitch is made is SCOREBOARD. In fact I this past world series the Blue Jays stomped the Dodgers in virtually every statistical category, but still lost.

Back to football, the **Buffalo Bills** made it to the Super Bowl 1990-1993, made the playoffs 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1974, 1980, 1981, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025  
Never won the Super Bowl.

Making it **to** the playoffs doesn't make you a champ.

So what Paul is saying is that the greater law, the Law of Faith, frees him from the lesser law, the Mosaic Law and all of it's rules. It has set him to "live for God."

That last phrase is loaded, because it is completely restructuring what it means to live for God. If you think there's a list of do's and do-not's and that's what pleases God, you've missed the point.

Living for God means to have faith or trust in God and to make much of Him, that is what is pleasing to God

"without faith it's impossible to please God" --Hebrews 11

In fact Isaiah says (and Paul retweets it) that our righteous deeds are like filthy rags or to be more specific *igguh beged* translates to all our righteous acts are like women's menstrual rags, and that's nasty.

You take all of your AWANAs awards and your PG watching movies and lay that before God as the payment for your sins and all he sees is used tampons.

The sacrifice that God is pleased with is a broken and contrite spirit, a faith in the Son of God. Paul was set free from the law by a greater law, the law of faith and that law allowed him to live to God.

### **Galatians 2:20**

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

In God's mind, we have been crucified. Our sins, past, present, and future have been paid for.

If the case is made against us, that we deserve hell, damnation, sorrow, pain, the response from heaven is "absolutely, he does/she does...see Jesus" SCOREBOARD!

Not only is our sin paid for, but we are also no longer controlled by the flesh, but by the Spirit.

### **Martin Luther:**

*"I live by the faith of the Son of God," he says. "My speech is no longer directed by the flesh, but by the Holy Ghost. My sight is no longer governed by the flesh, but by the Holy Ghost. My hearing is no longer determined by the flesh, but by the Holy Ghost. I cannot teach, write, pray, or give thanks without the instrumentality of the flesh; yet these activities do not proceed from the flesh, but from God."*

I'm going to blow it this week, you're going to blow it this week. If I'm living under the law, that falling short could paralyze me and create space between me and God, severing the power of the Holy Spirit. But if I understand that my blowing it this week has already been covered by Jesus, then doesn't that embolden me to keep pursuing Him, to get up and repent and be grieved for my sin, but know that I'm forgiven and can continue pursuing Him.

Get your eyes off of you and get them on Jesus. Get over yourself, celebrate Jesus. Don't celebrate you and don't loathe you. Just focus on Jesus.

### **Galatians 2:21**

*I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*

Some Christians are going:

"I don't need Jesus, I haven't missed a Sunday in two years"

"I don't need Jesus, I read my Bible every morning."

"I don't need Jesus, I've been to Africa on a short term mission trip"

"I don't need Jesus, I have a TPUSA T-shirt and a fish on my car"

You nullify the grace of God and you make Christ die for nothing, because you think you can earn your own salvation. And that's not what the gospel says, you're wrong.

This goes back to week one where Paul is astonished and blown away that you would trade actually KNOWING GOD for just knowing about God.

Instead of intimacy with the God of the universe, you tell Him, "just let me learn about you. I don't want to know you, I don't want to have an intimate relationship. I don't want freedom, I like my chains."

### **\$3 of God**

I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine.

I don't want enough of Him to make me love the unlovely.

I want ecstasy, not transformation;

I want warmth of the womb, not a new birth.

I want a pound of the **Eternal** in a paper sack.

I would like to buy \$3 of God, please.

Paul says "I do not nullify the gospel of God, because if righteousness were attained any other way, Christ dies for nothing."

How are you living? Are you waving Him off, "I got this"

How's that space between you and God?

Are you depending on your own righteousness to save you or have you realized that that won't save you. Only one thing matters, Jesus. Scoreboard.

# MAKING THE PLAYOFFS DOESN'T MAKE YOU A CHAMP

## GALATIANS 2:15-21 ESV

**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.

**17** But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! **18** For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. **19** For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. **20** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. **21** I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

## SMALL GROUP QUESTION

In verses 15–16, Paul repeats that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Why do you think Paul emphasizes this point three times? What misunderstanding is he trying to correct?

What does “justified” mean in this passage? How would you explain justification to someone who’s never heard that word before?

In verses 17–18, Paul pushes back against the idea that grace encourages sin. How do people sometimes misunderstand grace today? How would you respond?

Verse 19 says, “through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.” What do you think Paul means by dying to the law? What does it look like to truly live to God?

Verse 20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ... Christ lives in me.” What does that mean practically? How should this truth change the way we see our identity, struggles, or daily decisions?

Verse 21 says that if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Why is adding “works” to the gospel such a serious issue? What’s at stake if we get this wrong?