

Handout

Session Five: Law, Gospel, and Justification

Memory Verse: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

"I was perfectly justified!" Such is often the cry of those seeking to escape punishment. The claim—in the courtroom as well as in popular use—is a legal claim, an appeal to the laws of the state or to commonly accepted ideas of right and wrong. A lawyer, for example, may argue that his client committed no murder; rather, it was "justifiable homicide." That is, it was legal homicide, an act not condemned by the law.

1. Think of a time when you may have argued that your actions were "perfectly justified." On what basis did you believe this to be the case? Was it in fact true?
2. Compare Galatians 2:15–16 and Galatians 5:4. What is the Law incapable of doing? Why can it not do this?
3. Read Galatians 3:21-24. How does Paul refer to the Law in this passage? What is its relationship to the Gospel promise? What role does it play in preparing the way for salvation?

4. Compare Galatians 4:4–5 and Galatians 3:13. How do these passages describe the relationship between Jesus and the Law?

5. Compare Colossians 2:13–14 and Romans 10:4. How does Christ's relationship to the Law affect the Christian's relationship to the Law?

6. Compare Romans 16:25–27 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. How do these passages describe the relationship between Jesus and the Gospel?

7. Read Colossians 1:21-23. What are the effects of the Gospel? What relationship does Paul urge Christians to maintain with the Gospel?