

(Do?)-Be-Do-Be-Do  
Galatians 2:15-21

The Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 insured Gentiles entrance into the church. But that created some problems. Do Gentiles have to be circumcised (Acts 15:1) which is the symbol of God's covenant with Israel?

James offers the conclusion reached by the elders –

**Acts 15:19** - *Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God...*

During the discussion, Peter said an interesting thing -

Acts 15:10 - *Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.*

- a) No one can keep the law
- b) We are all saved by grace

This is why the books of James and Galatians are written –

- James – The relationship between faith and works

James 2:17-18 - *...faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

*Works don't save but salvation works.*

- John Calvin

- Galatians – The relationship between the law and grace

2:15-21 - *We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is not a 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. <sup>17</sup> 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! <sup>18</sup> For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. <sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*

### **First: No one is justified by the law – 15**

*15 - We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> 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.*

### **Second: Explaining a Two Difficult Verses – 17-18**

*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!*

If we are justified by faith in Jesus but still sin, doesn't Jesus just encourage us to sin?  
Doesn't the eradication of the law make us free to sin?

No, in fact...

*18 - For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.*

The only transgression would be to deny faith in Jesus and try to work your way to heaven. In that case, you'd actually be transgressing the law which points to Jesus.

*IMP:* The issue at hand is justification, not sanctification. We are justified by faith but we still sin. And yet, as Peter said in his sermon in Acts 15, even if we try to justify ourselves by the law, we still sin. So, which do we choose; the law of Jesus? Jesus!!! Why? Because, as Peter confessed in Acts 15, we never really kept the law anyway. It could never justify us. Only Jesus can.

### **Third: We die to the law to live to Jesus – 19**

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

No one, 'dies to the law' or gives up trying to be justified by it, to live licentiously. Oh no. We die to the law to live to God.

*"I'm giving up the law. It's dead to me and I'm dead to it. It never got me to God anyway. In fact, it kept me from God. I'm going to trust Jesus. He's my way to God."*

### **Fourth: This is How We Live the Christian Life – 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.*

a) We died with Jesus and dead people can't live

There are all kinds of examples of this in the NT -

Romans 6:2 - *How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

John 3:3 – We have been “born again”

Ephesians 4:22-24 - *put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

b) But....Jesus came back to life and now lives in us to live his life

John 15:5 – *I am the vine; you are the branches...apart from me you can do nothing*

2 Corinthians 13:5 - *...do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?*

Romans 8:10-11 - *But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

2 Corinthians 4:6-7 - *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*

Galatians 4:19 - *my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!*

God is in you. (That will/should rock your world).

c) So I do live, but the life I live (in the flesh) I live by faith in Jesus

What does this mean?

1 – I am a sinner who cannot live the life God calls me to, the life that is best for me and those I love

2 – During his incarnation, Jesus did live this life

3 – He now lives in me, to live his life

4 – I must recognize my inability, ask for his ability and live in that rest/work tension

This is not a “let go, let God” thing. It is a rest/work thing. I live repenting and He lives sanctifying.

**Fifth: Don't frustrate God's grace. 21**

21 - *my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!*

If you could justify and/or sanctify yourself, there was no reason for Jesus to come.

So, what does it mean that Jesus has come?

It means this: If Jesus came, there is no way to justify/sanctify yourself.

Only Jesus can do what needs be done

**Conclusion:**

You're wondering about the message title, aren't you?

ILL – James = Do. Paul = Be. Frank Sinatra = “Do, be, do, be, do.”

But, which comes first, the ‘do’ or the ‘be?’

(Do?)-Be-Do-Be-Do

The ‘Be’ comes first.

The world sings:  
“Do-Be-Do-Be-Do”

We sing:  
“Be-Do-Be-Do-Be”

You must ‘be’ a Christian before you can ‘do’ the works of a Christian. Why? Because only Jesus in you can do it.

III – The earth doesn't produce rain, but it does receive it. However, once received, the earth produces life. We don't produce righteousness. We receive it. But once we received, we produce it.

And that leads us right into Communion where we celebrate what Christ has done on our behalf.

A charge and an example of what I am talking about:

2 Timothy 2:7 - *Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

1 – You are charged to think. Jesus won't think for you.

2 – But only Jesus can give you biblical/spiritual understanding.

And all of this is something to sing about...

**Community Groups:**

1 – What was your greatest joy this week?

2 – What was your hardest moment this week?

3 – How did Jesus make the difference?

4 – What is the relationship between faith and works?

5 – What is the relationship between the law and grace?

6 – Can anyone be justified by works? Why not?

7 – Why do we need to ‘die to the law,’ i.e., trying to justify ourselves?

8 – Explain the poem:

*Run John, run, the law commands  
But gives us neither feet nor hands,  
Far better news the gospel brings:  
It bids us fly and gives us wings.*

- John Bunyan (1628-1688)

9 – How does Jesus live his life through us?

10 – What is the relationship between resting in what God can do and us living our lives?

11 – Why is it so hard to put off the old person?

12 – How do we frustrate God’s grace?

13 – What is your major takeaway from this text?

14 – Use the ‘earth does not produce rain but does receive it, then producing life” to talk about the ‘crucified life’ principle of Galatians 2:20.