

What Legalism Is

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[0:00] Well, the study last week and this week is Are You Legalistic? Grace, Obedience, and Antinomianism by Robert G. Spinney, one of the elders there in the Grace Baptist Church of Hartsville, Tennessee.

We noted that the book is divided in two and it deals, first of all, with what legalism is not and then what legalism is.

Last week we looked at what legalism is not and we see that in our culture, both outside the church and inside the church, sadly to say, very often the idea of being very strict in obeying God's commands is viewed as being legalistic.

If someone gets real serious about obeying God, then the charge will often come, well, he's being legalistic.

And so we really looked at that last week and found that being careful to obey God's commands is what the Spirit of God works in the heart of every one of the covenant people of God.

[1:10] It's the proof of our love for Christ. It's being like Jesus who did nothing except what the Father commanded. It's the norm of biblical Christian living and it's what God both expects of us and works in us.

So that was what legalism is not and I told you we'd have a chance for comments or questions at the beginning of this class. If you have any questions or comments on it, now's the time to voice those.

All right. Well, we're going to move ahead then with what it is. What is legalism? What does it mean to be legalistic? Let me just encourage you. I have set about a half dozen of these copies out in the book rack.

If you weren't here last week, it is important that we come to understand what legalism is not. In order to move ahead and see what the real disease of legalism is.

In medicine, getting a proper diagnosis of a patient's illness is critical. You cannot give a proper prescription of the remedy unless your diagnosis is correct.

[2:26] A faulty diagnosis can be harmful and even deadly. My friend Earl noticed a lack of appetite, which was not at all normal for him.

He also noticed he was tired and that he was depressed. That, too, was not the norm for him. So he went to his doctor, was checked out, and the doctor made the diagnosis that he was anemic with hypoglycemia and prescribed iron and antidepressant medicine.

Well, in reality, he had colon cancer. But the doctor missed the diagnosis. And it was only when he went for a second opinion that the doctor ordered the test and diagnosed the problem correctly as colon cancer.

But by then, it was in the second and third stages, and he nearly died for lack of correct diagnosis. And all the while that the doctor thought that it was anemia and hypoglycemia, the real culprit of colon cancer went undetected.

And the same is true in this whole business of legalism. As long as people are thinking, well, to be legalistic means you're real careful about obeying God's commands all the time, they're not going to be spotting and detecting the real culprit, the real disease of legalism that needs to be rooted out of our lives and out of our minds.

[3:58] So we want to understand, then, what is legalism? Spinney defines it this way. Legalism is an attitude or motive that leads people to try to establish, maintain, or improve a righteous standing before God by their own activities.

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Now, we notice that legalism is not the deed itself. It's rather a motive behind the deed. He gives the example of giving money to God's work.

That can be a legalistic action or it can be a God-pleasing act of worship. One and the same act. Legalism or a God-pleasing act.

What makes the difference? The giver's motive. If the motive is to win points with God, if the motive is to earn points and to earn His favor and His blessing by giving money, then the deed is legalistic and it's like filthy rags in God's sight.

[5:15] But if the motive is joyful gratitude for all of God's goodness and grace to me and Jesus Christ, and if the motive is, I want to see the fame of Jesus made known around the world and I give my money with this grateful heart and desire to see Christ exalted, then it's a sweet-smelling savor in the nostrils of God.

And so Spinney says, in order to understand legalism, it's important to realize that it is linked to the concept of justification.

In fact, legalism is a denial of the Bible's teaching on justification. Our first documented use of this word is found in the 1645 writings of the Puritan Edward Fisher.

He wrote that a legalist is one who bringeth the law into the case of justification. He brings the law into the whole issue of justification, of making ourselves right with God.

So, we need to understand what the Bible says about justification. If legalism is a misunderstanding, a denial of it, then what is justification?

[6:35] Because if we're right on justification, we will not slip into this spirit of legalism. Well, justification is a legal thing. It's a legal term, something that happens in a courtroom, namely the courtroom of heaven.

It's an action of God, the judge, in which he declares that a man is righteous, or just in sight of the law. And it brings to mind the judges that we have, the courtrooms here on earth.

You're taken to court, perhaps, because someone has an accusation against you. And the job of the judge is to look at the law, and then to look at your behavior.

Is there anything in your behavior that is condemned by the law? And if so, the gavel comes down, guilty. But if not, if there's nothing in the law that condemns your behavior, not guilty.

The pronouncement is made. This person stands right, upright, justified. There's no outstanding issues with the law in this person's life.

[7:47] And that's exactly what God does in the courtroom of heaven. Justification means that upon examination of you and your ways before his law, God finds absolutely nothing lacking.

And so he brings down the gavel and says, not guilty, but rather positively righteous. You're in a right standing with the law of God.

All its claims regarding you have been fully satisfied. Now, what does the law claim against you? Okay, we've got to think. Our behavior, but right now let's think.

What does the law claim against us? What does it require of us? Well, two things. A life of perfect obedience to its demands. So, as long as your life is perfectly in order with these commands, then you're in good standing with the law.

And secondly, it demands death and damnation for any transgression or shortcoming. Galatians 3:10 So, God can't declare you righteous unless both of those requirements are fulfilled in your case.

[9:03] Well, that presents a huge problem for us sinners, doesn't it? Because in the first place, we've blown it. We've not kept God's laws. Even if from this day forward we could keep all God's laws perfectly, there are still some laws that we haven't kept.

So, we've blown it. And because we've not kept God's laws, the law demands that we pay the penalty. Death.

Eternal death. Separation from God. The second death, I should say. Eternal punishments in hell. So, that's the problem that we have when we come to the judgment and we're weighed in the balance in light of the law of God.

So, justification is just downright impossible for us poor sinners. That's where we're left. Something must happen. A double imputation, as Spinney refers to it.

A double imputation. My sins needed to be imputed to Christ. They need to be put on His account. Taken off my account and put on His. And His righteousness, His perfect law keeping, needs to be put on my account.

[10:21] So, my sins must be imputed to His account and He must bear them to the cross and pay that dreadful debt that I owed of death under God's wrath.

And then His perfect obedience credited to me. So then, as God sees me in Christ, once that double imputation has taken place, God sees me in Christ, He sees me as righteous.

He sees me as one who has kept all of the commandments that have been given to me. Because Christ's obedience has been reckoned mine.

And so, He declares me righteous in the sight of the law. Nothing outstanding. Nothing anywhere in the books of strictest justice that says He hasn't lined up.

In Christ, my legal status before God is absolute righteousness. And again, it's not on the basis of anything that I've done, but it's solely on the basis of what Christ has done.

[11:27] Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die. Another's life, another's death. I rest my whole eternity. Luther called it an alien righteousness because it comes from outside of me.

It's not my own by my own obedience. It's Christ. And so, God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

So this is justification. I want to just read some passages. Turn to Romans 3. I've sought just to lay out the doctrine very plainly.

First of all, now I just want to read several passages. It is the biblical basis for these statements and let you see them for yourselves and then we'll start to draw some implications for the whole matter of legalism.

This righteous standing in justification is a free gift of God's grace received by faith alone and Christ alone without any works of our own. Romans 3 and verse 20.

[12:37] Therefore, no one will be justified or declared righteous in his sight by observing the law. Rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

But now a righteousness from God apart from law has been made known to which the law and the prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

There is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement or as a propitiation through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

[13:46] Verse chapter 4, verses 4 and 5. Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Romans 5.1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Verses 18 and 19.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

For justice through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners. So also through the obedience of the one man, the many will be made righteous.

Romans 10.3 and 4. Speaking of the zeal of the Israelites of Paul's day, he says they're zealous alright, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

[15:03] Verse 3, Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. These are just a few samplings of the scriptures.

You notice they're found in Romans. Romans is the great book that deals with, especially deals with this whole problem of how a righteous God can declare unrighteous sinners righteous.

And the answer is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it's so beautifully unpacked in the book of Romans. So legalism denies this, what we've just read.

The legalist thinks that what Christ has done is insufficient in and of itself. Yes, we need Christ. We need him. We need his life, his death in some way. But what Christ has done needs to be supplemented by what I do if God is to receive me as righteous in his sight.

[16:12] I can improve upon my legal standing before God by my own keeping of God's law. So you notice his motivation in keeping the law. His motivation is to earn salvation, to deserve God's favor.

And so legalism assaults the very work of Christ and makes the grace of God of none effect, denies salvation by free grace.

Now, who are the poster children of legalism in the New Testament? The Pharisees, the scribes, the Pharisees, and all their law-keeping, or at least the greater part of their law-keeping was driven by the wrong motive, by their legalistic motive.

They thought by fasting, by praying, by tithing, they could establish a righteous standing before God. Look at Luke 18, where Jesus is dealing with them.

And the very introduction to the parable that he speaks tells us who it is that he was talking to. And it sets the context then for why he gives this parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

[17:24] Verse 9 of Luke 18, And to some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself, God, I thank you that I'm not like other men, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

Here's the punchline of the story. Jesus says, I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Notice this man's righteousness consisted in what he didn't do. I'm not like this man.

[18:30] I'm not a thief. I'm not an adulterer. I'm not an evildoer, a tax collector. We can always find people who are worse than us, and that's the legalistic standpoint.

Not measuring himself against the law of God. That would be too strict. We'd all get condemned, wouldn't we? So we've got to find those who are beneath us, and that's what the legalist does. His righteousness consists in what he didn't do. And then in a few things that he did do, verse 12, I fast and tithe.

As if God's to be impressed. Wow, this man fasts and tithes. But he had reduced God's commands down to just a couple that he could handle.

He could count one for God and nine for himself. He could do that. He could set aside meals here and there. But to love his neighbor as himself, to walk humbly before his God, to despise all self-righteousness, to not hold hatred in his heart toward another, to not have lust in his heart toward another woman.

[19:46] These things he couldn't handle, so he found a couple commands that he could handle. He develops his own checklist, and then thinks himself right before God.

I don't do this, and I do do this, so God is with me. Now, we can do the same thing. We may have a different list. Maybe it's not tithing and fasting. Maybe it's reading our Bibles, having our devotions, praying, attending church, joining the church, being baptized.

We can have our own checklist. No outward scandalous sins. And as long as I'm okay with these things, then I might think that God is pleased with me.

Well, that's self-righteous pride. That's self-righteousness. And that's at the heart of the legalist, you see. Legalism can only flourish where the demands of the law are not understood.

And that's why the Christian, as well as the non-Christian, needs to have the law as well as the gospel preached to him. Because we'll have this self-righteous attitude creeping up within us unless we see ourselves slain by the law.

[20:58] It keeps us humble. It keeps us low. And we can't start looking down our noses at others like this tax collector and that adulterer and this pornographic fellow. No, we can't do that.

Why not? Because we stand before the law condemned in ourselves. And so we do need the law. As Christians, we need the law. We need to see the absolute standard of holiness.

And it drives us to see that we need the Savior every day of our lives. That standing that we have in him. There still may be much, you see, of a legalistic spirit in the Christian.

Legalism flourishes where justification by faith alone is not understood and regularly gloried in.

Even justified Christians can have a legalistic spirit creep in and cripple us.

In fact, unless I am constantly preaching the gospel to myself and feeding my soul on the fact that my righteousness in heaven depends completely upon Christ, my legal standing there is settled by his righteous life and death, then I can drift into this idea that, well, maybe I can improve my legal standing in heaven by having better devotions, by doing more good deeds and so on.

[22 : 18] I might start thinking that my acceptance before God is still undecided. And that I need to obey his commands in order to improve my legal standing with God. If I think that my acceptance with God depends upon my obedience to his laws, even in part, what happens to my assurance and my joy?

Well, it takes a nosedive because how much do I need in order to have acceptance in heaven? How much is enough? That was the whole problem that Luther struggled with when thinking that he could establish his own righteousness before God.

How much do I have to do? And I might slip into thinking that my acceptance before God has to do with whether or not I had a good time of personal devotions today, whether I read my Bible enough, prayed enough, and it often leads to an attitude of just dutifully putting in your time.

Well, I did that. And we have a checklist mentality. That's very much of the legalistic spirit rather than, I've come to meet with you, Lord Jesus. I've come to listen to your voice.

Confessing my sin, acting fresh faith in the perfect life and atoning death of my Savior. So, the Puritans would say the godly man works from life while the legalist works for life.

[23 : 37] And again, it all has to do with the motive, doesn't it? The legalist works in order to get eternal life, in order to please God, have God's acceptance of him, his standing in heaven to be justified, to earn grace.

Whereas the godly man works because he's been saved by free grace. He knows that nothing I have done has ever pleased God in and of myself. But Jesus has done it all for me and now I want to please him.

And so I work from life, not for life. Obeying God's laws becomes an act of praise, not of payment. And that attitude must be the dominant force in my law keeping. Let me read Spinney at this point and give you his own words.

I recall my own experience with personal daily devotions as a new Christian. I had been reared a Roman Catholic and was introduced to evangelical Christianity in college. I was biblically illiterate and had scant understanding of justification by faith alone.

[24 : 45] After my conversion, I was taught to have daily quiet times where I read the Bible and prayed. I did this faithfully and God kindly blessed my reading and praying. As I look back on those days, however, I realize that I went wrong about my quiet times.

That I went about my quiet times all wrong. When I woke in the morning, I began my day thinking that I possess zero righteousness before God. If I had a good quiet time, if I gleaned something from my Bible reading, or if I prayed enough through my prayer list, then I embarked upon my day confident that I was accepted by God.

But if I failed to have a good quiet time, I felt unrighteous and believed that I had failed to earn God's grace for that day. Sometimes I would try to have a second quiet time so I could again attempt to establish my righteousness before God.

I realize now that in those early days of my Christian life, I was a Protestant monk. I was legalistically attempting to establish my righteousness on a daily basis by performing my religious duties.

I had no sense of waking up in the morning already clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ. Although I thought I understood the concept of justification by faith alone, my understanding of my daily standing before God had nothing to do with Christ's imputed righteousness.

[26 : 07] So again, he says, our quiet times are not to become self-justification sessions where we earn our righteousness before God for the day.

So, this is where I think we find our struggles with legalism. We know enough about justification by faith that we wouldn't actually think that we can work our way into heaven perhaps.

That initially, at least, our righteous standing before God is outside of ourselves and has all to do with Christ, what He's done.

But there's perhaps the sneaking suspicion that we ought to improve on that status in heaven. That we ought to maintain it and improve it by obeying God's laws.

I wonder if you've learned that your flesh is very legalistic. Your flesh is very self-righteous. The flesh, that sinful part of me that still remains as a Christian, gravitates towards self-justification before God.

[27 : 14] And when this thought that we're justified by our level of sanctification, when that thought is imbibed, we start each day with our personal security resting not on the perfect righteousness of Christ, but on ourselves, our present feelings, our recent achievements in the Christian life.

With the legalistic principle of sin within us, it means that our war with legalism did not end the first time that we trusted in Christ for salvation.

That was the first time when we renounced all of our own self-righteousness as having any merit in making us right with God. But that first time will need to be followed by a second time, a twentieth time, a two-thousandth time.

As every day I must renounce any self-righteousness, anything in myself that would somehow earn the favor of God and resting entirely upon the righteousness outside of myself in Jesus Christ.

So the question comes, can my legal status before God, as God the Judge looks at His law and looks at me in Christ, can my legal status in heaven be improved?

[28 : 35] And if not, you're shaking your head, no, why not? Well, there are no degree and justification. There are sanctifications. And we are just as justified as the Apostle Paul or anyone else.

Excellent. Spinney said that was true of the thief on the cross that looked and lived, that he was just as justified as the Apostle Paul who lived all those years serving the Lord.

Good. Raj? This brings me to a question in my mind, the struggle that we have with a full assurance. Well, we fail, and we continue to fail.

And if we look back on a bad week, we begin to think in our minds, well, am I truly safe? How can I be safe and be acting in this way? And when we're talking about assurance now, following in line with these doctrines, it's got to be all or not.

Either we're saved or we're not saved, there's no greater in it here. And it's a difficult thing to have to struggle with. If you're working out of your own assurance before God, if the righteousness of Jesus, if the doctrine of justification, the reality of justification, does not have a huge foundation plank of your assurance, then you are going to struggle the rest of your life, even as we've said, because you'll ever be asking, have I done enough?

[30 : 10] So this huge plank in assurance is my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I need by faith to believe that all of His righteousness has been made mine.

And in the eyes of God, as He looks on me, He sees me with the same legal status as He looks upon His own Son. I'm absolutely righteous. There's not one bit of sin seen in me as to the judge's view of me in this matter of justification.

So you're right. If that doctrine and that reality is not front and center with us, we'll wrestle with assurance in ways that we're not meant to wrestle with it.

But why can we not improve upon our righteous standing in heaven? It's Christ's righteousness.

You see, when we put it that way, it gets real clear right away, doesn't it?

And we must renounce all attempts at trying to improve this righteousness. We have the same legal standing as Jesus Christ Himself. That's what it means to be in Christ.

[31 : 17] So that God the just is satisfied to look on Him and pardon me. You see, in justification, God isn't even looking at me. He's looking at Christ and forgiving me for Christ's sake.

I'm seen in Christ. I'm clothed in His righteousness. What the Father sees is His own Son's righteousness. So we're never more justified than the moment we first believed.

The newest Christian among us is just as justified as the oldest. Both are clothed in perfect righteousness. Let's think about the flip side.

Well, if I can't, by my good deeds, improve my righteous standing in heaven, can I, by my bad deeds, diminish my righteous standing in heaven?

Well, again, the answers are the same. No, because my legal status is not based upon my performance, but is based upon the obedience and death of my Savior for me.

[32 : 20] Again, my law keeping plays no part whatsoever in my justification. He's not even looking my way in this matter.

He's pleased to look on Christ and pardon me. So the remedy for legalism is to live upon the gospel of Jesus Christ, His righteousness, on my behalf, received by faith alone apart from the works of the

law.

Think of all the reasons we have for this. We have Satan accusing us of our sins. We have a conscience that should accuse us of sin when we sin.

We should feel the Holy Spirit's pressure accusing us and convincing us of sin. And with all of this coming upon us, we must fly often to Jesus Christ, our righteousness.

I need to tell myself over and over, John, your perfect standing in heaven is in Jesus Christ. Right now, He is in heaven, righteous, and that's your standing in heaven.

[33 : 30] As the hymn writer says, Behold Him there, the risen Lamb, my perfect, spotless righteousness. And I need to do that often. Behold Him there. There He is. There's my righteousness. And that means I can approach the throne of grace of this Holy God with full confidence that He accepts me, not because I had a good day, but because I have a great Savior, as Spinney says.

Even on my worst day, I'm still clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, I'm still accepted in the Beloved. And I can be confident of that reality as I bring my confession of sin before Him.

Does it raise any other questions or comments? Roger brought up the issue of assurance. What other issues do you see growing out of this doctrine of justification and the whole matter of legalism?

There are many different errors on this doctrine. Some people would go so far in embracing this doctrine of justification as to say, God can't see any sin in my life.

Period. What's wrong with that? Does God see sin in the lives of His children? Or doesn't He? Well, it depends on what perspective you're looking at.

[34 : 57] If you're looking at it from the standpoint of my status in heaven, my justification, no, He can't see any sin in me because He sees me righteous in Christ. but if that's all I live with is with the doctrine of justification, I can err on the side that would say, so then, I really don't need to be careful about sin because God can't see any sin in me anyway.

But it's missing other important areas of the Scripture, isn't it? there's a whole relational aspect of our relationship with Christ that is not answered in the justification of the courtroom.

The Bible often talks about our relationship with God not as the man on the witness or the guy in the accusation box in a courtroom, but many times speaks of our relationship with God as a father and a son, doesn't it?

And what does the father do with the son who's disobedient? Does he say, I don't see his disobedience and so I do nothing about it? No, that's to err and to see life only through the grid of justification.

God does see our sin, doesn't he? Isn't that not the teaching of Scripture everywhere? He weighs the very motives of our hearts. He can see it all. So we can't just throw those verses away because we believe the doctrine of justification that God sees as righteous in Christ.

[36 : 33] That's our legal standing in heaven. It's settled once and for all. It can't be undone. But as God looks upon me today, yes, he sees my pride. Yes, he sees my worry.

He sees my greed. He sees all these sins. He's not blind to them. In fact, he'll bring his rod after me, won't he? He'll send his spirit after me to make me feel terrible because of my sin, to make me mourn that I've sinned against such a gracious Savior.

What is that? That's God taking notice of my sin and dealing with me. God's love. But does it ever threaten my status as a child of God? No.

That's the beauty of the two things. That's where we've got to hang on to both sides. I have a son. And he belongs to me.

He belongs to my family. And he will always be a member of my family. Now, he does things that are wrong. He disobeys me. And I have to get after him.

[37 : 38] And sometimes I have to bring tears to his eyes. But he is always and ever will be my son. And that's the picture of the scriptures concerning us and God's dealing with us.

So, can you see how we need to, again, be balanced in our view of these things? Praise God for the doctrine of justification. Make it your daily boast. Make it your daily glory.

But don't go so far as to say I only see life through the grid of justification. There is the whole realm of sanctification. I'm imperfectly changed into the image of Christ. And I'm going from glory to glory until I see him face to face and will become like him.

And while I'm going imperfectly along, God is seeing my sin. He's dealing with me in grace. Never is he saying, well, because you've sinned, you're done. You're no longer one of my children. children. No, we're disciplined children. It's his fatherly displeasure that we bring upon us. The Bible speaks about the frown of God, the smile of God, the face of God, and what that face toward us is. [38:43] a father can have a frown on his face toward his child, but it doesn't mean you're no longer my child. It means I'm displeased with what you did. I'm calling you to repent of it.

So never are we to challenge our legal status before God just because we have sin as we're working out our own sanctification with fear and trembling. nothing can change our status in heaven. Any other comments or questions before we conclude this morning?

Raj? I think we need this. We mature in the faith. As the Lord reveals more and more of our own weakness and our heart, it's a challenge to our faith.

We have to have greater and greater faith because we go downward in our knowledge. ourselves and how worthless and how wicked we are.

[39:45] We begin to question things like how can God hate me and do with me? I must cross the line here. And he just keeps peeling away and showing us what he really sees.

He doesn't show us everything because we would all go into this fear. So that challenges us that we have to believe more about God's righteousness and goodness and grace.

And I think that's part of that sanctification process. It's kind of a downward process going on.

Amen. Yes? Just a little personal testimony.

Once a year, I'd like to pull Jerry Bridges' book, 20 Grace on the shelf. It helped me straighten myself out. All right.

What Dennis is saying, he needs to bring that book out repeatedly in his life. And again, that's showing that we have this propensity towards legalism in our hearts. Do you ever feel once you've sinned that you can't come right to God just yet because you haven't felt bad enough about your sin?

[41:13] You haven't groveled in it long enough? You haven't paid for it enough yet by straightening out your life? Well, that's legalism, pure and simple. And we're prone that way, aren't we?

Other than coming right out of the pigpen of our sin and saying, Father, I'm unworthy. But I come through the righteousness of Jesus. Forgive me. Receive me in Christ for his sake.

That's the way we need to live. Yes? I don't want to say to make us feel that way when we actually know better but yet we fall into his trap by thinking we went too far and there's no hope.

That's why I need to come to this book pastor. Amen. Be reminded who I am and who he is.

Because Satan will try to trick in the book to take! down the wrong path. Amen, brother.

Well, let's pray and thank God for Christ, shall we? Father, we've thought about your grace this morning. we've considered things that will give us goosebumps in the day of judgment when we see others being damned to hell who live no more unrighteous lives than we and yet we being welcomed into eternal glories.

[42:32] To know that the difference is because we have the righteousness of Christ put to our account by faith. faith itself has come from you. We pray, Lord, cause us to be gripped here and now with this great standing that we have in heaven.

May that give us motivation to worship today, to give, to serve, that all that we do might be done from life and not for life, from your favor and not for it.

keep us from error on the right and the left, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.