

Second Hand Preacher

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 12, 2016

Galatians 2:16, 19-21

This passage was one that stood in the way for Christian ecumenism, that ability to work with other Christian denominations. Martin Luther, who started the Lutheran Church in the 1500's, had a strong belief that it is faith alone that saves someone and that it has nothing to do with works. Catholics argue back saying that the saved person can't help but do works. That as the Apostle James writes of the importance of good works in the life of a Christian. These arguments have divided the Church and there are even divisions in Protestant communities that developed after Luther made his declaration. Protestants in general believe that grace covers us and when we declare Jesus as our Lord and Savior we are saved. Catholics believe that faith saves us as well, but a saved person is infused with grace and they can't help but to do good works.

St. Paul was a scholar of the law. Jewish law consumed him in the early part of his adult life so much that he set out to kill those who followed the Way of Jesus. His teachings appeared contrary to the law. The Pharisees, of which Paul was one, opposed Jesus even though he was actually fulfilling the law. They condemned Jesus to death because they didn't think he was living out the law; but he was the fulfillment of the law. So I believe that is why Paul puts such an emphasis on faith. Faith is very necessary when dealing with the question of salvation.

We as a community of faith need to show our love to each other. By faith we are justified. We back it up with good works. God's grace is such a part of us that we can't help but to do good works. The law directs our actions to be the most faith-filled people we can be. If we can have a personal relationship with Jesus and live out the sacraments, then we are ready for life eternal.