

BRUSHFIRES | WEEK 9

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Core Doctrine: Salvation Through Faith – Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide)

Verse: Romans 5:1 (CSB)

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Book Context:

The Apostle Paul wrote Romans around A.D. 57 to believers in Rome as a theological masterpiece, unpacking the gospel with unmatched clarity. Chapters 1–4 establish humanity’s guilt and the righteousness that comes by faith apart from works. Chapter 5 opens with a climactic “therefore”—a bold declaration that those who are justified by faith in Christ now stand in peace with God. This verse marks a turning point from guilt to grace, from wrath to reconciliation.

Core Doctrine:

The doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide) is the heartbeat of the gospel. To be “justified” means to be declared righteous—not made righteous by works, but counted as righteous because of Christ’s finished work, received through faith. Paul doesn’t say we are being justified gradually—he says it’s already done. Past tense. Settled.

This is not a reward for effort—it’s a gift of grace. We are not justified by spiritual performance, moral improvement, or religious activity. We are justified by faith—trusting in the One who obeyed perfectly and died in our place.

And what is the result? Not just forgiveness, but peace with God. No more hostility. No more condemnation. No more striving to earn His love. This is the glorious exchange: Christ takes our sin, we receive His righteousness.

Without this doctrine, Christianity becomes a burdensome treadmill of never knowing if you’re enough. With it, the soul can finally rest.

Danger of Not Holding to the Core Doctrine – Week 9: Salvation Through Faith – Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide)

If we do not hold to justification by faith alone, we do not have the gospel. We may still speak the name of Jesus, still believe in grace, still call ourselves Christians—but we will be building on sand. This doctrine is not one brick among many—it is the cornerstone of how sinners are made right with a holy God.

The danger is both ancient and modern. It's found in the pull toward self-righteousness, the pressure to perform, and the assumption that God's love must be earned. We may not say it outright, but whenever we add anything—baptism, obedience, feelings, religious effort—to faith in Christ as the basis of our justification, we declare that the cross was not enough.

Sometimes this error feels responsible: “We don't want people to abuse grace.” Sometimes it feels humble: “Surely I have to contribute something.” But it is neither. It is spiritual slavery. And it is subtle—because it offers a form of godliness while denying its power (2 Timothy 3:5). It leaves people exhausted, uncertain, and constantly trying to earn a love that Christ has already secured.

Justification by faith alone means that the guilty are declared righteous not by working for God, but by trusting in the finished work of Christ. It means that our standing before God does not change with our moods, our failures, or our performance. It means that Christ's obedience is counted as ours—and our sin is counted as His.

To deny this doctrine is to declare that Jesus' death was insufficient. But to embrace it is to say with joy, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). And that truth sets the heart free.

Conversational Evangelism:

Many people believe they'll get to heaven if they're “good enough.” Ask them, “What does it take to be right with God?” and you'll quickly hear answers built on works: trying harder, being kind, going to church.

But Romans 5:1 shows us something better—peace that comes by faith, not performance. You can follow up with, “What if the peace you're looking for isn't earned

—but offered?” That opens a door to talk about the sufficiency of Christ and the security of faith.

We’re not offering a new religion—we’re offering a Savior who already finished the work.

Call to Action:

Let this verse remind you of where your peace comes from. Not your track record. Not your feelings. Not your ability to stay on track. Peace with God rests on the unshakable reality of justification by faith.

This week, take time to reflect on the difference between working for God’s approval and resting in it. Then, look for ways to speak that rest into someone’s striving heart. You don’t have to convince them they’re sinners—you just have to show them that Jesus is enough.

Fire Starter Question:

When did you first realize that peace with God wasn’t something you had to earn—and how can your story help someone else stop striving and start trusting?