

# BRUSHFIRES | WEEK 19

---

A Discipleship Series from Brushwood Press | [BrushwoodPress.com](http://BrushwoodPress.com)

## Core Doctrine:

Salvation Through Faith – Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide)

## Verse:

Philippians 3:9 (CSB)

“...and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith.”

## Book Context:

Paul writes Philippians from a prison cell, yet the letter overflows with joy—not shallow optimism, but joy rooted in a righteousness he did not earn. In chapter 3, he recounts his spiritual résumé—his heritage, zeal, obedience—but calls it all “dung” compared to knowing Christ. In verse 9, we reach the core of Paul’s faith: being found in Christ, clothed in a righteousness not his own, but received by faith. This is not a righteousness achieved—it is a righteousness given.

## Core Doctrine Explanation:

The doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide) teaches that God declares sinners righteous based not on their performance, but on Christ’s. Through faith—not works, not rituals, not effort—we are united with Christ, and His obedience becomes ours.

This isn’t poetic language. It’s legal language. A verdict has been rendered: Justified. Not in process. Not under review. Not on probation. Final. Declared righteous by the only Judge who matters.

This means our peace with God is not anchored to our devotion, our discipline, or our spiritual emotions. It’s anchored to a cross and sealed by a resurrection. We don’t climb toward acceptance—we start there, because Christ descended to take our place.

## Danger of Not Holding to the Core Doctrine – Week 19: Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide)

If we lose sight of justification by faith alone, we will not lose religion—we will lose rest. We will become spiritual performers, always measuring, always comparing, always afraid we haven’t done enough. And eventually, we will either collapse under guilt—or harden into pride.

This doctrine is often denied not by words, but by lifestyle. We say we believe in grace, but live like we’re trying to earn it. We read our Bibles and pray, not out of joy, but fear. We compare ourselves to others, looking for proof that we’re doing better. We hold our assurance hostage to our performance, and call it “humility.”

But Paul dismantles that lie. “Not having a righteousness of my own.” None. Zero. Not even on his best days. And if Paul—the former Pharisee, the missionary, the martyr—wasn't righteous by the law, what makes us think we are?

The danger is deeper than doubt. It is a subtle replacement of Christ with self. It's whispering, “Jesus, thank you—but I'll take it from here.” And the result is deadly: pride without peace, obedience without worship, and service without joy.

But when we embrace this doctrine, everything changes. The cross becomes beautiful again. Repentance becomes refreshing. Assurance becomes possible. We stop asking, “Have I done enough?” and start rejoicing that Christ has. We obey not to earn, but because we are already loved beyond comprehension.

To deny justification by faith alone is to gut the gospel. But to embrace it is to breathe again.

### **Conversational Evangelism:**

Many people still believe God grades on a curve. Ask gently:  
“How good is good enough to stand before a holy God?”

Then share this:

“What if God's standard wasn't good enough—but perfect? And what if Jesus met that standard for you, and offers it as a gift through faith?”

That turns the conversation from performance to Person.

### **Call to Action:**

This week, pay attention to where you're still trying to earn what Christ has already secured. Are you obeying to be accepted—or because you already are?

Confess any self-righteousness or shame. Then rest—not in your progress, but in your position: justified, loved, secure.

### **Fire Starter Question:**

When did you realize that righteousness isn't something you achieve—but something you receive—and how did that change your entire approach to faith?