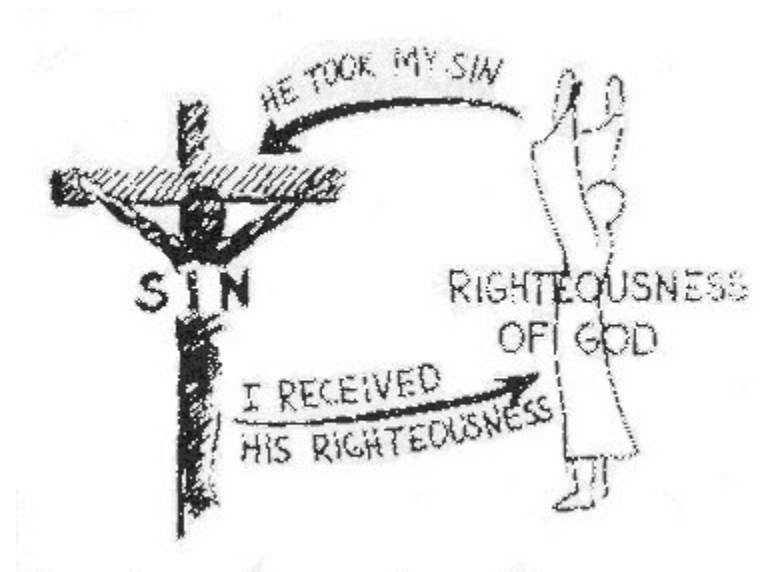
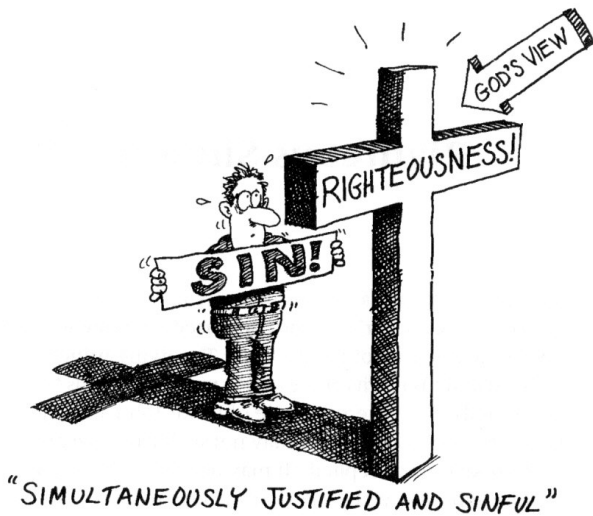


JUSTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

- Definition: an instantaneous act whereby God declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of the blood of Christ
- It is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, i.e., as conformed to all its demands.
- The word *justify* is a translation of the Greek word *dikaioo* that means “to declare righteous.”
- The Greek word used in the presentation of this teaching describes crediting something to someone’s account, calculating, counting something for (or even against) someone.
- The words for “righteous,” “righteousness,” “justify,” etc., are all from the same root in Greek. They describe the legal status of individuals.
- Justified (δικαιωω) - to be declared in the right; when the verb form is used, it is always used in the passive when in reference to salvation
- God declares sinners righteous!



THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE

- The primary issue in the Reformation was a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church over justification
- John Calvin called justification by faith the “hinge” of the Reformation
- Martin Luther said that justification by faith alone is the article upon which the church stands or falls
- This cardinal doctrine was seen as the battleground for the Gospel itself
- The Roman Catholic Church’s understanding of justification:
 - Something that changes us internally and makes us more holy within
 - It is the sanctifying and renewing of the inner man
 - Begins with baptism and continues with faith

- Based not on *imputed righteousness* but on *infused righteousness* - that is righteousness that God actually puts into us and that changes us internally and in terms of our actual moral character
 - Since RCC views justification as including something that God does within us, it follows that people can experience varying degrees of justification
 - Logical consequence of this view is that our eternal life with God is not based on God's grace alone but partially on our own merit as well
- The Council of Trent was a Catholic council held from 1545-1563 to refute the Protestant Reformation and codify Catholic theology...it summarized justification this way:

Council of Trent Session VI – Sessions Concerning Justification

- Canon 7.** If anyone says that all works done before justification, in whatever manner they may be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; that the more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins, let him be anathema.
- Canon 9.** If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone,[114] meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.
- Canon 11.** If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost,[116] and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema.
- Canon 12.** If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy,[117] which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.
- Canon 14.** If anyone says that man is absolved from his sins and justified because he firmly believes that he is absolved and justified,[118] or that no one is truly justified except him who believes himself justified, and that by this faith alone absolution and justification are effected, let him be anathema.
- Canon 24.** If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works,[125] but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.
- Canon 30.** If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world[131] or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened,[132] let him be anathema.
- Canon 33.** If anyone says that the Catholic doctrine of justification as set forth by the holy council in the present decree, derogates in some respect from the glory of God or the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and does not rather illustrate the truth of our faith and no less the glory of God and of Christ Jesus, let him be anathema.

- This is what Martin Luther was taught as a monk..During his time at the monastery, Luther dedicated himself to all manners of trying to assuage his guilty conscience
- It was the fear of God's wrath that consumed him for the next five years - so much so, in fact, that he did everything within his power to earn God's favor
- He devoted himself to fasting...to long hours in prayer...to pilgrimages...to frequent and long hours in confession (sometimes for 6 hours a day)...to the sacraments and penance
- He even tried acts of self-punishment like sleeping on hard floors...going without sleep...enduring cold winter nights without a blanket...even whipping himself in an attempt to atone for his sins
- Speaking of his dedication he said, "I kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I."

- It was in 1508 when he was studying Romans that he became particularly fixated on Paul's teaching about the "righteousness of God" in the book of Romans
- But instead of finding hope in the "righteousness of God." Luther came to hate that phrase...because he thought of this righteousness as a condemning righteousness...a punitive justice which condemns sinners
- The question he had been wrestling with was: If he was unrighteous, in spite of his best efforts, how could he be made right before a holy and just God?
- The answer to that question came in 1513 and 1514 when he was lecturing through Psalms and studying the book of Romans again when he came to Romans 1:16-17

Romans 1:16-17 ~ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

- Little by little, he began to understand that "the righteousness of God" in Romans 1:17 is not punitive...it is not referring to God's righteous indignation against sin
- Rather it is referring to God's own righteousness imputed to the sinner by faith which then declares him righteous

• He says, "At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I gave heed to the context of the words, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" Then I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith... Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open. An entirely new side of the Scriptures opened itself to me...and I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the loathing with which before I had hated the term "the righteousness of God."

- Luther rediscovered justification by faith alone...He came to see that when sinners receive Christ by faith, they receive not just forgiveness of sins, but also the righteousness of Christ is imputed to their account and all the perfections of Christ's life is credited to them!
- Thus, a right understanding of justification is necessary for a right understanding of Gospel
- A right view of justification is the dividing line between Gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone and of salvation by works

Justification Results in Believers Being Declared Righteous in God's Sight

Romans 3:19-28

Romans 4:1-12

Romans 5:1 ~ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Romans 5:18 ~ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Romans 8:30 ~ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Romans 8:33 ~ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies

Galatians 2:16 ~ nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

- In justification, God declares that we, though guilty sinners, are righteous in His sight
- This does not change our inner nature or character but results in a declaration of forgiveness and righteousness
- Thus, regeneration and justification are different
 - Regeneration = act of God in us whereby he causes us to be born again
 - Justification = judgment of God with respect to us where he declares us to be righteous
- Justification involves 2 parts:
 1. Forgiveness of past sins
 2. Imputation of Christ's righteousness
- Justification is not simply a pronouncement of innocence but of righteousness
- In addition to the pardon of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified.
- The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law
- Justification is an act not a process

Justification is Based on the Righteousness of Christ

- How can God declare the ungodly righteous?
- An earthly judge declares an innocent man right
- But God declares a guilty man right - How? → on basis of Christ's righteousness
 - Adam's sin is imputed to us
 - Our sin is imputed to Christ
 - Christ's righteousness is imputed to us

Romans 3:21-22 ~ But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

Romans 4:3 ~ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:6 ~ just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Romans 5:17 ~ For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30 ~ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

2 Corinthians 5:21 ~ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- God treated Christ as if He were our sin so that He could treat us as if we were Christ's righteousness

Philippians 3:9 ~ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

- Paul is describing his conversion experience...in vs. 4-6 he describes what he was like pre-Christ
- In vs. 7-10 he describes how he came to Christ
- And in vs. 9 he captures the heart of justification...Paul understands that being found in Christ means

NOT having a righteousness of his own based on his own works

- Paul is contrasting two different kinds of righteousness: 1) Human achievement; 2) Divine accomplishment
- Human achievement doesn't save: vs. 9 ~ not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*
- Divine accomplishment does save: vs. 9 ~ but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith
- This is justification by faith alone...the source of righteousness is *God Himself*...Christ gives the believing sinner His own perfections
- Grudem: "It is essential to the heart of the Gospel to insist that God declares us to be just or righteous not on the basis of our actual condition of righteousness or holiness, but rather on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness, which he thinks of as belonging to us" (727).
- In other words, the reason for which God accepts us and pardons us is not found in us!
- It is an alien righteousness!

In other words, the reason for which God accepts us and pardons us is not found in us! It's not because we were good. It's not because we were better than others. It's not because God foresaw good works in us. It's not because God foresaw faith in us. It's based upon what God saw in Christ and credited to our account. This is a glorious, radical truth. But we've taken it for granted, forgotten and domesticated it, and some today are even trying to modify it. Over and over through the years, we have seen false teachers attempt to sneak something of our work back into justification. One reason for this: People just can't imagine that God would declare sinners to be righteous. It is counter-intuitive. But that is precisely what Paul says that God does. We naturally incline to think that God will justify those who are righteous. But Paul is saying that God accepts and pardons those who don't deserve to be accepted and pardoned, declares righteous those who are unrighteous, declares accepted those who ought not to be accepted, and declares sinners in rebellion against Him to be accepted and in right relationship to Him. That's how radical justification by faith is!

Ligon Duncan, <http://ligonduncan.com/justification-by-faith-the-radical-truth/>

- How can God justify the ungodly? → 2 things must take place
- First, we must have no guilt before God...sin which separates us from God must be taken away
- But that is not enough...Christ doesn't just take us from negative to zero...Zeros don't get into heaven
- Second, we must be not only not guilty but also righteous
- And the wonder and glory of justification is that Christ does both of those!
- He becomes for us both a sacrificial death AND a perfect life...He provided both a pardon and a perfection
- He became a substitute in 2 senses:
 - In his suffering and death, he became our curse and our condemnation...He paid for our sin...He took the full wrath of God against our sin
 - In his perfect life and perfect obedience to God in keeping the law and never sinning once, He became our perfection
- Or to say it another way...Christ's death is the climax of His atoning sacrifice which satisfied God's wrath against our sin...AND His death is the climax of a perfect life of righteousness which is imputed to us
- So there is both a negative element in justification AND a positive element
- The negative element: (passive obedience)...refers to Christ's sacrificial death on the cross...when a person believes in Jesus Christ, all his sins past, present, and future are placed upon Jesus Christ on the cross
- A whole life of sin and guilt is imputed to Christ's account...Sin is removed and the penalty—the curse of the law—is endured for us by Christ

- But a perfect, positive righteousness is required before one is *entitled* to go into heaven
- This is the positive element (active obedience)...refers to Christ's perfect obedience to God's law lived in behalf of the believer
- Christ's life lived in perfect submission to God's will in thought, word, and deed is imputed to the believer's account
- In the entire history of mankind there are only 33 ½ years lived on earth by one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, that God will accept
- That's why he wasn't born and immediately went to the cross...that's why his perfectly keeping the law was so important...that's why him not sinning once is so important

Justification is Granted by Grace Through Faith Alone

Romans 3:23-24 ~ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Romans 3:25-26 ~ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 5:1 ~ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 2:16 ~ nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Philippians 3:9 ~ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is **through faith in Christ**, the righteousness which comes from God **on the basis of faith**,

- The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is faith in or on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Faith is called a "condition," not because it possesses any merit, but only because it is the instrument, the only instrument by which the soul appropriates or apprehends Christ and his righteousness
- Faith is the instrument which lays hold of Jesus Christ and His merits
- Why is it by faith? → Romans 4:16 ~ For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace
- It is justification by faith so that salvation is always by grace...SO THAT we have nothing to boast in ourselves!
- Faith justifies us, not by way of merit...but as uniting us to Christ

And Can it Be?

No condemnation now I dread...Jesus and all in him is mine...Alive in Him, my living head...and clothed in righteousness divine...Bold I approach the eternal throne...and claim the crown through Christ my own

The Solid Rock

When he shall come with trumpet sound...O may in then in Him be found...Dressed in his righteousness alone...faultless to stand before the throne

Before the Throne of God Above

Behold Him there, the risen lamb...my perfect spotless righteousness