

## ROOTED

### *What about Justification*

November 6, 2022

**INTRO.:** How many have heard this phrase, “*God helps those who help themselves?*” Several years ago some people were conducting a survey to see how many of the Ten Commandments people could name as given in the Old Testament. Some of those responding to the survey quoted what I shared above as one of the ten. *God helps those who help themselves.* What is the problem with this statement? First of all, it isn’t in the Bible and second of all, it isn’t accurate! As we observed and celebrated communion this morning we were reminded that our salvation is all of God. Ephesians 2 tells us that, apart from Christ, we are dead in our sins. This means we are separated from God, under His rightful judgment and condemnation, and unable to remedy the situation on our own. I read a story this week that reminded me of this truth.

This brings us to today: What about Justification? Paul David Tripp says this: There is no such thing as Christian theology that doesn’t have a clear understanding of the doctrine of justification at its core. All other formal religions are built on some form of theology that the “gods” are upset with human beings and need to be appeased. Each is a system of fear, divine anger, and bondage to law out of which the believer never rises. It is a life burdened by the constant need to perform, the constant need to measure up, and the constant need to build self-convincing arguments for your goodness. It’s an exhausting way to live that never works.

The reason the doctrine of justification is so precious is that every human being desperately needs forgiveness. You don’t enter into the glorious rest of justification by hoping in yourself, your efforts, your intentions, or your ability to somehow, someway, measure up to God’s requirements.

It is with this in mind that we want to look at three things:

**WHAT** is justification

**HOW** does justification occur

What is its **SIGNIFICANCE**

### **WHAT?**

Here are some core definitions:

Lewis Sperry Chafer, “To be free from guilt or innocent of every charge.”

He goes on to say, “Justification is a declaration by God respecting the Christian that he has been made forever right and acceptable to God Himself. The basis is the position to which the Christian has been brought through God’s grace. There is no justification provided for man that is not eternal in character.”

Lawrence O. Richards: “The theological meaning of justification rests heavily on the judicial concept. God is the ultimate judge of all beings in the universe. David called on God to justify him – to declare him innocent – despite his sin and his guilt (Psalm 51)

The word in Greek means: to acquit, to vindicate, to pronounce righteous

This is totally an act and declaration of God. We, who are sinners by birth and by choice, are declared righteous by God. All glory goes to Him!!!

### **HOW?**

The next logical question is, “How is this possible?” How can a holy, righteous, sinless God declare that sinners are righteous in His eyes and that they stand totally forgiven before Him? Sin is serious business! How do I know that? Look at what Adam and Eve did after disobeying God in the Garden of Eden. They are God’s special creation, made to have ongoing fellowship with Him. Yet, after they sin, what do they do?

**Genesis 3:8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

They hid from their Creator, the One with whom they were to enjoy continual fellowship. Something had gone horribly wrong. We can also see the seriousness of sin by looking at the Old Testament sacrifices. The priests had to sacrifice the best of the animals to cover the sins of the people.

Paul David Tripp in his book, *Do You Believe?*, speaks of what we learn by observing the OT sacrificial system:

- \*The incredible, patient, and forgiving mercy of the Lord toward sinners
- \*The uncompromising holiness of God
- \*God's righteous anger with sin
- \*The inescapable seriousness of sin
- \*The inability of sin-flawed people to earn acceptance with God on their own
- \*The inadequacy of God's law as a means of achieving acceptance with him
- \*The inadequacy and temporary nature of sacrificing bulls and goats for sin
- \*The need for a once-for-all sacrifice that extends God's mercy without compromising his justice

So, exactly how is God able to make this judicial declaration? I want to look at a few Scripture passages that help to explain. First of all, how man is not justified before God.

**Galatians 2:15–16** “We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ **16** know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

*“justified:”* aorist, passive. This is an action that occurred in the past, moment of belief, and is accomplished by another: God.

**NO ONE** can be justified in God's sight through keeping the law, by following God's commands. Why is that? It is because we are all flawed, and the law shows that we can't keep the law. (like the little merry go rounds they had at playgrounds that didn't get you anywhere and made you sicker and sicker)

Justification is not by works but through faith.

**Romans 5:1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

*“since we have been justified:”* aorist tense (point of time in the past); passive: we did not do this on our own, it was accomplished by another

*“we have peace with God:”* present tense: this is an ongoing action because of an action in the past

**Romans 5:2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

*“we have gained access:”* perfect tense: from a point of time in the past through eternity

*“we now stand:”* perfect tense: from a point of time in the past throughout eternity

*“we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God:”* present tense (literally “we boast”)

It's all because of what Jesus did in becoming the sacrifice for our sin!! You want to brag, brag about Jesus. As a kid growing up I wanted people to know about my Dad, he was awesome. Let me tell you about my heavenly Father!!!

**Romans 5:9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

*“we have now been justified by His blood:”* aorist, passive, participle: this has already happened, at the moment of salvation

*“shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him:”* future, passive (this is an action done by another in the future) God has the present and the future handled.

**Romans 5:10** For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

There would be no such thing as Christianity if there were any way that a human being could reconcile himself to God and stand righteous before him based on performance. In his righteous life and substitutionary death, Jesus made it possible for us to be forgiven, accepted, and declared righteous by God. Paul David Tripp

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

We know this is a big deal for eternity, but it is also a big deal presently. When God justifies us, He also has the Holy Spirit indwell us, giving us the power to have a changed life. Let me share some practical ways God changes our lives because of this doctrine. As we have said many times before, this is not a self-reformation project. Let me share some ways this doctrine affects us. (Several of these are from Paul David Tripp's book with my thoughts added)

\*Gratefulness: thanks be to God for our salvation! When you and I understand what God has done and is doing for us it changes our outlook on life. This should affect how we treat others, how we extend grace to them, how patient we are to them, how generous we are with the resources that have been given to us, our willingness to forgive others

**2 Corinthians 9:15** Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

\*Freedom: freedom not to sin through God's power and the Holy Spirit living inside of us. Freedom to serve: a change in the priorities of life. It isn't, "I get to do whatever I want to because I am forgiven." It is, "I get to serve a holy and righteous God instead of being consumed with myself. I serve God and others, not out of duty or fear, but out of love. There are certainly days when we don't feel like serving but they are far from the majority.

**Galatians 5:13** You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

\*Humility: hasn't pride been the root of all sin? I know better, I want my way, this is my life, my time, my stuff. Paul David Tripp: Pride crushes compassion and sympathy. Pride makes it very hard for you to be patient and understanding. Pride makes you entitled and demanding. Pride never produces a willingness to forgive. Pride makes you judgmental and condemning. Pride makes you far more concerned about the sin of others than you are about your own. Pride is the enemy of self-sacrificing love. Pride makes you picky and easily irritated. Pride forces you to deny your wrongs and to shift the blame to someone or something else. Pride makes it easier for you to complain than to give thanks.

Pride destroys relationships!!!

**Proverbs 16:18** Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

\*Assurance: those who come to faith in Christ are secure in Him. How would it be possible for God to declare a person justified in His sight and then undeclare that justification?

The child of God is justified by virtue of the fact that God has declared him to be righteous. The righteousness which is the basis of His justifying decree is no less than the absolute righteousness of God made available through Christ and is imputed to all who believe. (Lewis Sperry Chafer)

**Romans 8:31–39** What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? **33** Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **36** As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." **37** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

\*Relationship: we are now in Christ! The Apostle Paul repeats this phrase some 33 times.

We are justified because we are in Christ. We are being sanctified because we are in Christ. We are loved as adopted children because we are in Christ. We are forgiven because we are in Christ. We have every need supplied because we are in Christ. We are objects of the Father's love because we are in Christ. We have eternal hope because we are in Christ. (Paul David Tripp)

**Romans 8:1** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

As God the Father looks at us, He sees the righteousness of Christ!

**SO WHAT???**

\*Am I attempting to do what only God can do?

\*Am I attempting to live the Christian life on my own strength?

Impossible without God's strength and empowerment

Not to be done without fellow believers

\*In what ways has the doctrine of justification affected my life? (take some time this week to list some ways)