

JUSTIFICATION

Rom. 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

This is such a mighty subject that, - like many other aspects of the doctrines of grace, - would take all eternity to preach and to study. It is the ground upon which our faith in Christ is built. Thomas Watson wrote, “Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity”. In order to understand true, Biblical, Holy Spirit conversion of the sinner to the saint the doctrine of justification must be applied.

The *Baptist Confession of Faith* declares, “God freely justifies the persons whom He effectually calls. He does this, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and accounting them, and accepting them, as righteous”. Justification is a work that begins outside the sinner in order to be applied in the heart.

The difficulty in carrying out a study of this subject is that it is so precious and no matter how we look at it there is always – *always* – so much more to study.

The first and foremost great truth with which we must approach the doctrine of justification is that God’s grace is *God’s grace* and that it is freely given by Him *alone*. ... God’s mercy is eternal, - it is not restricted in any way by time; His plan for the salvation of His people was prepared in the Council Room of Glory from before the foundations of this world. Man had no input in that eternal meeting-place and therefore *justification* is all, - absolutely, totally and completely, - the greatest work of God’s mercy and grace.

The basic question is, “How can the holy God declare undeserving sinners righteous?”

In Rom. 5:6 we read about **THE HELPLESSNESS OF MAN**, *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

* *without strength* ... There are no degrees of this type of spiritual helplessness; some people are not more helpless than others, as pertaining to their salvation, - all are equally unable to do anything towards their own salvation.

* For example, Nicodemus the Pharisee was no more capable of contributing to his salvation than Mary Magdalene, the demon-possessed prostitute, was.

- * All men, women, boys and girls are helpless to bring about the change necessary for their salvation.
- * The Bible says that we *were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1)* ... and there is no degrees in 'dead'; dead is dead!
- * Man is helpless, powerless and totally incapable of contributing even the slightest iota to his/her salvation because, - outside of Christ, - *spiritually-speaking we were yet without strength.*
- * Arising from our **HELPLESSNESS** is our **HOPELESSNESS**. Paul explains this in a simple way to the *Ephesians, 2:12 at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*
- * Outside of Christ the sinner is **helpless** and **hopeless**. He can do nothing about his situation because of his **hopeless** spiritual state.
 - * I cannot save myself, or contribute in any way at all!
- * John Bunyan writes about the man he sees in his book, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a Dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a Man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great Burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the Book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying What shall I do?"
- * If you could have done anything towards your salvation it would have lightened the load Christ bore on the cross ... but also, it would have taken away from our Saviour some of the glory that belongs alone to Him.
- * That is what the false doctrine of Arminianism teaches and it is flagrantly anti-Scriptural and anti-God's sovereign grace. It takes away from God something of that glory which He guards so jealously.
- * I am humbled that the Holy Spirit began to deal in my life, - as a young boy, - and He showed me my need of becoming right with God. He took me to the point where I repented of my sins and He guided me into the sheepfold of which Christ is the Good Shepherd.
- * The only glorying that I do about my salvation is that *all* the glory is due *alone* unto Him. He started it, He continues it, and one day – when I stand before the Throne in Heaven – my salvation will be completed.

* Jonathan Edwards, “If there be ground for you to trust in your own righteousness, then all that Christ did to purchase salvation, and all that God did to prepare the way for it, is in vain”.

* Simply put, outside of Christ our state was **helpless** and **hopeless**.

* ... Back to *Pilgrim’s Progress*, “Now, I saw upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was, as he was wont, reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, What shall I do to be saved? I saw also that he looked this way and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist, coming to him, and asked, Wherefore dost thou cry? ... He answered, Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to Judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second”.

* You see, our **helplessness** and our **hopelessness** is so ingrained that they are like a prison from which there is no release ... *and then* ... as Charles Wesley writes in his hymn, “Long my imprisoned spirit lay, Fast bound in sin and nature’s night; Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, - I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee”.

* Sin is like the prison that renders the prisoner incapable of ever escaping; it’s a disease that renders the victim dead. The **helplessness** and the **hopelessness** of sin can never be exaggerated!

* This is my favourite subject, - the doctrines relating to our salvation, - because it is the means by which souls destined for Hell are saved

* I don’t have to sit down with someone and work out what kind of a spiritual ‘diet’ they need in order to be saved; *the one Gospel does all!* There is not a single person who is beyond the reach of God to save.

* The most beautiful part of this doctrine of justification is that it all hinges on just one great Biblical Truth, ...

THE SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE OF THE SINLESS SON OF GOD.

* He is **sinless**, - II Cor. 5:21 *he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

* He had a particular purpose in our justification, - *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* God sent His Son in order to redeem a remnant who would have the burden within their hearts to be like Him.

* In the Old Testament the priest placed his hands on the sacrificial lamb and he believed it to be free of defect or any imperfection.

- * The blood was shed for the sinner and the sins of the sinner were *piled* upon that lamb without blemish. ... And the blood that was shed atoned completely for the repentant sinner.
- * Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself became the sinless, perfect Lamb of God in order to purchase our salvation and to justify us wholly in the sight of the holy God.
- * The Godhead required nothing less than that the sinless Son would be the means by which His redeemed would be purchased and justified.
- * In order to do this the **sinless** Son had to become the **Sacrifice**. Even before Christ died on the cross He had already sacrificed ... He had given up, for a time, the glories of Heaven.
- * In that Council Room in Glory He had the plan worked out ... right to the most minutest of detail, - *nothing* was left to chance or any outside influences! Only the will of God put together the plan of God!
- * He had already *sacrificed* by stepping down from the praises and adulation of the angels in glory. He left it to come to a stable in a little town in Judea. He *sacrificed* His privileges to the extent that He said, [Mt. 8:20 The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.](#)
- * But the greatest **sacrifice** that brought about our salvation was offered up when the Father, - like old Abraham with Isaac, - laid out His Son on the altar of Calvary. On this occasion no angel came to intervene ... the knife of the Father plunged, - with all the wrath that the holy God has for sin, - into the **sinless sacrifice** and the Lord Jesus Christ *on Calvary* became our **substitute**!
- * ... The substitute comes to take the place of another; Jesus went to the cross to take *my* place for *my* sin so that I need not go, - He went to the cross in *my* place. He became my **substitute**.
- * Had I needed to die for my sin ... it would have taken eternity in Hell, but Jesus took upon His **sinless** body on the cross my eternal torment and suffering.
- * He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, i.e. even in eternity God planned to send His Son to become my **substitute** at Calvary ... even long before I cared!

* I never asked Him to die for me; I never asked Him to be nailed to the cross for me ... but He did it ... and He did it freely. ... “In lovingkindness Jesus came My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame Through grace He lifted me. ... He called me long before I heard, Before my sinful heart was stirred, But when I took Him at His word, Forgiven, He lifted me.”

* There was nothing left to chance at Calvary; there was nothing left to the last moment; there was nothing left in abeyance to see what the **hopeless, helpless** sinner might do. God had it all planned, - He had the correct measure of sin placed upon the body of the Lord Jesus Christ that would be atoned for.

* He suffered the agony of payment that was rightly ours to suffer ... and He suffered it all *alone*.

* The love of God demonstrated itself as grace and mercy, - the likes of which this world had never experienced before.

* God, in His grace, does not give us what we deserve; Paul wrote to the [Romans, 3:24 Being justified *freely* by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus](#). There is nothing about us that *compelled* God to act as He did. The Greek word for [freely](#) is translated in [Jn. 15:25](#) as ‘*without a cause*’ (But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause) ... i.e. Consider, we are justified *without a cause!*

* There is absolutely nothing about us that would merit the salvation of God. It is all of grace, - God owed us nothing, but He drew up the marvellous plan of salvation.

* Salvation does not come cheap, - the Bible word *propitiation* must be included here; *propitiation* means the satisfying of God’s holy law; it means meeting its demands at every point so that God can freely forgive those for whom Christ died ... for whom the blood was shed.

* The guilty person with his offences stands before the judge awaiting sentence. At that point for the chosen of the Lord, God imputes the righteousness of Christ in the place of our own sinfulness.

* It was perfect and exact justice the Father meted out at Calvary, - each drop of blood that fell from the body of our Saviour was necessary for the *redemption* of His people.

* When Christ suffered the wrath of His Father He fully and completely met the demands God’s holiness required.

* His blood shed reached all the way back through all the Old Testament saints, - and took care of all their sins. It reached forward to every sinner who has been saved since He died on Calvary ... and it will continue to save every last one just as Christ comes through the clouds.

Conclusion.

* **Helpless** and **hopeless** ... outside of Christ; Christ, - the **substitutionary, sacrifice** of the **sinless** Son of God.

* I believe it is in his book entitled *Ultimate Realities, - Finding the Heart of Evangelical Belief* that R.M. Horn writes, “In every period when God has awakened His people, the Gospel of justification has come to the fore”; he said, “Remove justification and the church begins to crumble”.

* I believe that! Remove the doctrines associated with the Truth of God’s Word regarding the Doctrines of Grace and we can see it all around us ... the church crumbles; why does it crumble? Because it seeks to take to itself a portion of that which God so jealously guards.

* We need to have such a hold on justification that when the days become dark we shall find it holding us.

* ... And justification supplies the only efficient motive to obedience. I hear people tell me they are saved; if you’re saved ... you must behave accordingly! *He saved us to make us holy!* ... That is the purpose for which Christ shed His blood.

* If someone tells me they are saved and yet they are unwilling to cleanse themselves from every stain of sin, I believe that it only goes to show they have not truly been cleansed from the guilt of sin. R.M. M’Cheyne put it simply, “He will not save you and leave you in your sins”.

* When you are truly saved, you have a desire to glorify God, by the way you live and by the conversation you speak. When He justifies you, it always results in a life changed to His Glory.

* It’s a serious doctrine, but a very beautiful and personal doctrine. I trust that God has been impressing it upon the hearts and minds of each of us once again, ... to His eternal glory.