

Justified By Faith

Sermon delivered on September 21st, 2014

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Text: *Romans 3:9-28*

Last Sunday we started to look at what happens when a person repents and believes the Gospel. When a sinner becomes a Christian, that is, repents and believes the gospel, that person is ... *Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

My prayer is that God would awaken you and me to the reality that we are blessed beyond measure.

Eternal life, forgiven of sin, reconciled with God, cursed removed, no more condemnation, justified, redeemed, adopted, regenerated, joint heir with Christ, became a child of God, became a citizen of Heaven, new creation, servant of God, sanctified, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, became a member of the body of Christ, access to God, peace, joy, freedom, hope, purpose, and many more.

Today I want us know and understand, that when a sinner repents and believes the Gospel is that, **that person is justified.**

Some may say, "You mean that person has been forgiven of sin!" Yes, it includes forgiven of sin but to be justified is much **more than forgiven of sin.** It includes forgiveness of sin which is already an amazing thing.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2: Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

But God went beyond forgiving our sins. He has justified us.

To be justified, **does not mean acquitted**, that is, the accused successfully defended oneself against all charges. To be justified, **does not mean paroled**, that is, the accused is found guilty and set free with certain restrictions and conditions.

I - What is Justification?

Justification is a legal word, wherein a person charged or prosecuted is **pronounced or declared righteous**, and is openly absolved.

When a **earthly judge** justifies an accused person **he does not make that person an upright person**. He simply declares, that in his judgment the person is not guilty of the accusation but is upright in terms of the law relevant to the case.

It is not the function of the judges to make people righteous.

*Deuteronomy 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall **justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.***

The judges are to, simply and only, give a just and fair judgment and therefore they were to declare the innocent, righteous, just as they were to declare the wicked, guilty.

Now, in justifying us, **God does not only forgive our sins**. After He forgives our sins, **He declares us to be righteous**. God openly declares the sinner, as one who has **completely satisfied the demands of the law**. God looks at the sinner as if he had never sinned, **as if the sinner has kept the whole law perfectly all his life**.

In justifying us, God openly declares that we are righteous even **though we are not**, which is, in our legal system, an outrage. It is a scandal. It is a violation of justice.

In our legal system ...

*Proverbs 17:15 He that **justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.***

To justify the wicked, that is to declare the guilty criminal as righteous when he is not, is an abomination to God. If an earthly judge were to do this it would be an abomination in God's sight. Man must punish and condemn the wicked and he may justify only the righteous. But God is able to justify the ungodly.

*Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that **justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***

God does what no man can do. Yet He is not unrighteous. He is just when He justifies the ungodly.

Man justifies the innocent, but God, justifies only the guilty.

II - How can this be?

How can God justify the ungodly and remain just? How can a just God justly justify the unjust? How can a holy and righteous God let the guilty sinner go and not violate justice. What is it that enables God to be just when He justifies sinners?

The answer is ...

1. Substitution

*1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once **suffered for sins, the just for the unjust,** (the innocent for the guilty, the righteous for the condemned) that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

This is a **divine exchange**. What an exchange! Jesus Christ taking our place. Instead of you and me paying for our sins, dying for our sins, Christ did it. He was punished for me. He suffered and died for my sins. He suffered and died for us.

*Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us**. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Substitution is the twofold act of Christ:

1. He took upon Himself the guilt and paid the penalty of our sin

*Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, **being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.***

Christ *redeemed us*, bought us off from the curse of the law, **having become what we were**, on our behalf a "curse," that we might no longer be a "curse."

*2 Corinthians 5:21 **For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***

"*Sin for us*," **not sinful**, but bearing sin of the whole world.

2. He imputed His righteousness upon us.

Imputed is an **accounting term** which speaks of the adding or subtracting of something to someone's account. This **bookkeeping term** is also translated "**counted**" or "**reckoned**".

*2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***

Christ was made a curse for us, was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, that is, that His righteousness might be put to our account.

God places our guilt upon the account of Jesus Christ and places Christ's righteousness upon our account.

My sins became His and His righteousness became mine.

So the answer to the question how can God be the justifier of the unjust is...

*Romans 3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: **that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.***

He **pardons** all our sins, and **accepts** us as righteous in His sight, only because of the **perfect sacrifice** and the **righteousness of Christ**, imputed to us, and **received by faith alone**.

The righteousness and the obedience of Christ is the ground of justification. Christ's perfect righteousness, perfect obedience to the law and his perfect sacrifice is the ground of sinners being declared right before God.

Justification is an act of God's free grace, **whereby He exercises mercy without violating justice.**

III - What is the motive of justification?

Why would God do that? The answer is not found in us or anything that we did, but the answer is found in God. It's the free grace of God.

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

God does not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy.

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

IV - What is the goal of justification?

What is God's purpose in justifying the ungodly?

1. God justifies the ungodly so that the ungodly will become godly

God did not justify us so that we will stay ungodly. No, He redeemed us, justified us to sanctify us. All whom God justifies, He also sanctifies

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Justification and sanctification are inseparable. Our righteousness and holiness is not the basis of our justification, but it is the necessary fruit of justification.

When God justifies He also sanctifies.

"No one is regenerated who is not justified. No one is justified who is not regenerated. No one is regenerated and justified who is not progressively sanctified." - J. C. Ryle

2. That God may get all the glory

This is the **best way** for God to be glorified. This is the **only way** that God could get glory out of sinful men.

6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1 Corinthians 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

1 Corinthians 1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

V - Applications

1. To the believers

Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God

God found out a way to justify us by '*rich grace and precious blood.*' We were all involved in guilt; none of us could plead not-guilty; and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death. Now that the judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid, and not distress the debtor, should fill us with wonder and love.

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

2. To the unbelievers

Christ has laid down His blood as the price of our justification. He offers Himself and His righteousness to us, to justify. He invites all to come to Him. He is willing, ready and able to save. Come to Him while the door of mercy is still open!

Isaiah 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2: Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3: Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.