

**"The Doctrine of Justification"**

**Romans 3:21-5:11**

**Part 2**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Romans we stepped into the Doctrine of Justification. In the Doctrine of Condemnation Paul made it very clear that because we are all sinners we are therefore all guilty before God and we are deserving of the wrath and the judgment of God. When people are brought face to face with this Truth many want to reach for the Law as a means of salvation. But Paul made it very clear that the Law was never given as a means of salvation, but it was given so that we could see just how sinful we really are.

**Notice Romans 3:19-20**

This conclusion of the Doctrine of Condemnation then led Paul to answer the greatest question that has ever been asked, **"How can sinful man be justified before a righteous God?"**

The answer is that God has provided a way for HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS to be imputed to our account.

**Notice Romans 3:21-22**

When man repents and places his faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ he is then given the righteousness of God. Instead of our sins being listed upon our account our sins are removed and the righteousness of God is credited to our account. This is available to all who are willing to believe.

**Notice Romans 3:23**

Being justified before God is our greatest need because we are all guilty of sin. Before a person is saved every sin we ever committed remained upon our account and those sins separated us from God.

**Hebrews 10:17**

*<sup>17</sup> And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

This is the promise to us who are under the New Covenant and so we can understand that the opposite is true for those who are not saved. Their sins are all on their account and are required to be paid for. These are the very sins that separate us from God before salvation.

**Isaiah 59:2**

*<sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

But when we repent and turn to Jesus Christ by faith our sins are removed, and we are born again into the family of God. We no longer have a sin debt and we are no longer separated from God.

**I. The Provision for Man's Greatest Need  
Part 2**

**Notice Romans 3:24**

I want to take some time and look at the word "justify" here in this verse because it is so very important. The word means "to declare to be righteous". The word speaks of our "standing" and not of our character.

**Notice the words of Gaebelein:**

*"In classical Greek the verb JUSTIFY was sometimes used to mean "do right by a person, give him justice." As a result, it could be used in the sense of "condemn." But in its biblical setting it is used in the opposite sense, namely, "to acquit" (Ex 23:7; Dt 25:1). It is clear both from the OT and the NT that JUSTIFY is a forensic term; it is the language of the law court. But to settle on "acquittal" as the meaning of justification is to express only a part of the range of the word, even though an important part (Acts 13:39). There is a positive side that is even more prominent in NT usage--"to consider, or declare to be, righteous." The word does not mean "to make righteous," that is, to effect a change of character. Because he considered it ethically deplorable that God should account righteous those who have been and to some extent continue to be sinful, Goodspeed defied the linguistic evidence and rendered justify "to make upright." He failed to realize that the question of character and conduct belongs to a different area, namely, sanctification, and is taken up by Paul in due course, whereas justification relates to status and not to condition."*

The point that we need to understand is that when the Bible says that we are "justified" it speaks of our standing before God. We are "declared to be righteous" in our standing. It is only God who can make a person righteous in their standing, for it is only God who can impute to us His very own righteousness.

**Notice the words of another Bible teacher:**

*"The word for **justify**" means to declare the rightness of something or someone. **Justification** is God's declaration that all the demands of the law are fulfilled on behalf of the believing sinner through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. **Justification** is a wholly forensic, or legal, transaction. It changes the judicial standing of the sinner before God. In **justification**, God imputes (reckons, places on one's "account") the perfect righteousness of Christ to the believer's account, then declares the redeemed one fully righteous. **Justification** must be distinguished from **sanctification**, in which God actually imparts Christ's righteousness to the sinner. While the two must be distinguished, **justification** and **sanctification** can never be separated. God does not justify whom He does not sanctify.*

Let us notice the words of Wiersbe:

*"Do not confuse **justification** and **sanctification**. Sanctification is the process whereby God makes the believer more and more like Christ. Sanctification may change from day to day. Justification never changes. When the sinner trusts Christ, God declares him righteous, and that declaration will never be repealed. "*

To be justified is a once and for all act and it defines the believer's state. Just as a person cannot be tried for the same crime again after they have been acquitted so it is with our standing before God. God's JUSTIFICATION means that we will never be tried or condemned for our sins whether past, present, or future.

As someone has well said **justification** goes beyond acquittal to approval and beyond pardon to promotion. Acquittal means only that a person is set free from a charge. Justification means that positive righteousness is imputed. It is important to realize that justification is a reckoning that takes place in the mind of God. It is not something a believer feels. The believer can be certain it has taken place because the Bible says so.

**Notice Romans 3:24 again.**

Now we need to be sure to notice the words "freely" and "grace". Justification is not something we can earn, and it is certainly not something that we deserve. It is FREELY applied to our account based completely upon grace and the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. I appreciate the words of J. **Vernon McGee** on this word "freely".

*Freely is the Greek word **dorean**, translated in John 15:25 "without a cause." Our Lord Jesus said that they hated Him freely, without a cause—there was no basis for it. Now Paul is saying, **Being justified freely—without a cause**. There is no explanation in us. God doesn't say, "Oh, they are such wonderful people, I'll have to do something for them!" As we have seen before, there is nothing in us that would call out the grace of God, other than our great need. We are justified without a cause. It is by His grace, which means that there is no merit on our part. Grace is unmerited favor; it is love in action.*

**Barnhouse** has this to say about **dorean**...

*When we understand this (word **dorean**), we can see the true basis of our salvation. There was absolutely nothing within man that could recommend him to God. God did not sit in Heaven and look down upon this earth until He had found something in some men that recommended them to Him. He gave salvation to men who deserved Hell. There will not be one person in Heaven who deserved Heaven except the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only one who merited Heaven. But an innumerable company who merited Hell are going to be in Heaven simply because the grace of God decided that they should be there.*

Let me get back to the word "freely" again. Because it is FREELY given we can be sure that it can never be lost. If we were required to live a certain way in order to maintain our standing before God, then it would not be FREE, and it would not be based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. It would then be conditional, meaning it would be based upon our ability to live up to the standards of the Word of God which are perfect and therefore we would all be lost.

**Justification** is not a wage that God owes us--the only wage He owes us is death (Ro 6:23); it is a gift that He offers freely.

**Notice Romans 3:24** again.

Our justification is only possible because of the REDEMPTION that is in Jesus Christ. What does this statement mean? The idea of "redemption" speaks of paying the ransom for a slave so that he would be able to go free.

Notice the words of Barclay on redemption:

*"In every case [redemption is] the conception (of) the delivering of a man from a situation from which he was powerless to liberate himself or from a penalty which he himself could never have paid." He goes on to relate that the Roman philosopher Seneca who tutored and advised Nero was "full of this kind of feeling of helpless frustration. Men, he said, were overwhelmingly conscious of their inefficiency in necessary things. He said of himself that he was a man not to be tolerated. Men, he said with a kind of despair, love their vices and hate them at the same time. What men need, he cried, is a hand let down to lift them up.*

*The highest thinkers in the pagan world knew that they were in the grip of something from which they were helpless to deliver themselves. They needed liberation. It was just that liberation which Jesus Christ brought. It is still true that he can liberate men from helpless slavery to the things which attract and disgust them at one and the same time."*

**John 8:31-36**

<sup>31</sup> *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

<sup>32</sup> *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

<sup>33</sup> *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

<sup>34</sup> *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

<sup>35</sup> *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*

<sup>36</sup> *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Let us now get back to the fact that our justification is based upon the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. We are justified because of the price which Jesus paid on our behalf. We were slaves to sin and we were under the sentence of death. We were bankrupt and completely unable to pay the price required by God to be set free. Jesus however paid the ransom and He has set us free and because His death satisfied the wrath of God we then can be justified/declared righteous in our standing before God.

**Colossians 1:14**

<sup>14</sup> *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

Our justification is completely based upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ because His blood was the price He paid on our behalf.

Now, I think it is important here to see that there are six aspects of our justification in the New Testament.

1. **We are justified by grace.**

**Romans 3:24**

<sup>24</sup> *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

This speaks of how we are undeserving of justification.

**2. We are justified by faith.**

**Romans 5:1**

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

This shows man's responsibility in order to be justified.

**3. We are justified by the blood of Jesus Christ.**

**Romans 5:9**

<sup>9</sup> Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

This speaks of the price that was paid so that we could be justified.

**4. We are justified by Jesus' resurrection.**

**Romans 4:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

<sup>24</sup> But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

<sup>25</sup> Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

This shows that God has the power and Authority to declare us righteous.

**5. We are justified by God.**

**Romans 8:32-33**

<sup>32</sup> He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

<sup>33</sup> Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

God is the One who declares us righteous and therefore, there is no one who can bring any charge against us.

**6. We are justified by works.**

**James 2:21-26**

<sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

<sup>22</sup> Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

<sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

<sup>24</sup> Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

<sup>25</sup> Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

<sup>26</sup> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

This is not a contradiction of Scripture. James is writing about how our righteous works simply verify that we have truly been justified. Abraham's offering of Isaac was proof he had saving faith and Rahab's hiding of the spies proved her faith was a saving faith.

**Conclusion:**

No matter what sin a person has committed, no matter how dark a person's life has become. If they are willing to rest their faith in the redemption that is in Christ, they can be justified. They are NOT just acquitted but they will "be declared righteous" by God Himself. This is the answer to man's greatest need.