



New Covenant

Presbyterian Church

“BLESSEDNESS AND BOASTING”

ROMANS 4:1-8

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“Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.” – WSC Q. 33

A. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE ILLUSTRATED

1. THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

- SELF-RIGHTEOUS, LIVED A RIGID LIFE AND DIDN’T SEE HIS NEED FOR A SAVIOR. WHEN THE LORD SOFTENED HIS HEART HE DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO SHARING THE GOSPEL.

2. PAUL APPEALS TO THE SCRIPTURES

- THE REASON WHY PAUL WAS GREAT IS BECAUSE HE WAS DEEPLY ENTRENCHED IN THE WORD OF GOD. HE DID NOT TRY TO DEFEND JUSTIFICATION WITHOUT APPEALING TO THE SCRIPTURES (I.E. GENESIS 15:5 AND PSALM 32:1-2)
- PAUL APPEALS FIRST TO ABRAHAM FOR THE JEWS THEN TO DAVID. ABRAHAM KNOWS HE NEEDS A SON. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE MUST BE AN HEIR. THE WHOLE HEART OF WHAT THE GOSPEL MEANS HANGS IN THE BALANCE OF THE WORDS OF GENESIS 15:6.

“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.” Psalm 32:1-2

- BLESSEDNESS IS NOT HAVING YOUR SINS IMPUTED TO YOU. THE GREAT BLESSING WE’VE RECEIVED IS THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE OUR INIQUITIES IMPUTED TO US. IF WE ARE IN CHRIST, THEN WE ARE MOST BLESSED BECAUSE WE WILL BE ABLE TO STAND ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

3. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE IS THE GREAT DIVIDING DOCTRINE: NOT BY WORKING BUT BY TRUSTING WE RECEIVE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

“In other words, revivals and renewals are necessary because the default mode of the human heart is works-righteousness—we do not ordinarily live as if the Gospel is true. Christians often believe in their heads that “Jesus accepts me; therefore I will live a good life,” but their hearts and actions are functioning practically on the principle “I live a good life; therefore I will live a good life,” but their hearts and actions are functioning practically on the principle “I live a good life; therefore Jesus accepts me.” The results of this inversion are smug self-satisfaction (if we feel we are living up to the standards) or insecurity, anxiety, and self-hatred (if we feel we are failing to live up). In either case the results are defensiveness, a critical spirit, racial or cultural ethnocentricity to bolster a sense of righteousness, an allergy to change, and other forms of spiritual deadness, both individual and corporate. In sharp contrast, the gospel of sheer grace offered to hopeless sinners will humble and comfort all at once. The results are joy, a willingness to admit faults, graciousness with all, and a lack of self-absorption.” – Tim Keller

- IF WE ARE PARALYZED THEN WE’VE FORGOTTEN THIS DOCTRINE (I.E. ROMANS 3:21-26).
- IF SALVATION IS BY WORKS THEN MAN GETS THE GLORY. IF SALVATION IS BY GRACE THEN GOD GETS THE GLORY.
- APPLICATION: ARE YOU FORGIVEN? ARE YOU IN JESUS? WILL YOU STAND ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT? ARE YOU TRUSTING JESUS? JUSTIFICATION IS A ONCE AND FOR ALL LEGAL ACT. HE ACTS FOR US WHEN WE ARE IN A STATE OF UNGODLINESS AND MAKES HIS PEOPLE STAND ON THE GREAT DAY OF JUDGMENT.

“A gift of the Holy Spirit is the ability to freely admit how sinful we are apart from Christ. Quietness of a guilty conscience comes when we are washed in the blood of Jesus.” – Nick Batzig

B. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE EXPLAINED

1. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IS THE GREAT EXCHANGE: OUR LAWLESS DEEDS ARE FORGIVEN AND OUR SINS ARE COVERED. OUR INIQUITY IS IMPUTED SOMEWHERE. SOMEONE IS HAVING OUR SINS IMPUTED TO THEM. JESUS TOOK THE WRATH THAT WE DESERVE FOR OUR SIN.

“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” – 2 Corinthians 5:21

2. JUSTIFICATION IS ONLY BY GRACE—WE EITHER LABOR FOR SALVATION OR TRUST IN JESUS. THERE IS NO IN-BETWEEN. WHEN WE ARE TRUSTING, GRACE IS Poured IN. ON THE CONTRARY, WHEN WE ARE LABORING WE ARE STORING UP WRATH FOR OURSELVES.

3. WHEN WE SIN WE DON’T BELIEVE IN JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE. JESUS CHRIST WAS SINLESSLY PERFECT. PILATE’S WIFE (MATTHEW 27:19), THE CENTURION (MATTHEW 8:5-13) AND THE THIEF NEXT TO JESUS ON THE CROSS (LUKE 23:31-43) ALL KNEW HE WAS PERFECT. THAT SINLESS RECORD COVERS US IF WE ARE TRUSTING HIM. GRACE IS COSTLY. IT’S NOT CHEAP. IN THE FACE OF THE AGONY HE BORE OUR ONLY RESPONSE IS TO LEAVE BEHIND THE WORLD AND LIFE WE ONCE LIVED.

4. APPLICATION: DO YOU HAVE A GUILTY OR PROUD CONSCIENCE? ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH SIN? THERE IS A WAY--TRUST IN JESUS. HIS GRACE IS FREE. WHEN YOU THINK OF ALL THE WORKS OF THE FLESH YOU HAVE DONE REMEMBER ALL THE WRATH YOU DESERVE FOR YOUR SIN HAS BEEN CAST ON TO JESUS AND ALL OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS HE HAS IMPUTED TO YOU. IF THIS IS TRUE OF YOU, YOU OUGHT TO BE GIVING GOD THE GLORY AND PRAISING HIM FOR WHAT HE’S DONE.