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SESSION 3 | JUSTIFIED BY FAITH: THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

I. Introduction

- Luther's Conversion: A doctrine that brings boldness.

II. The Doctrinal Importance of Justification

- "The article upon which the Church stands or falls" – Martin Luther
 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:3-10)

- A doctrine that is easily lost:
 - “Every week I preach justification to my people, because every week they forget it” – Martin Luther

- What is the Doctrine: Justification is God's legal - sometimes called forensic - act whereby he declares us righteous on the basis of the righteousness of Christ.
 - “*Simil Justis Et Peccator*” – At the same time righteous and yet sinner
 - Romans 4:4-8- “Counted Righteous”

 - Alien Righteousness
 - *Extra Nos* – Outside myself

 - Imputation
 - Infused – Fill up your righteousness bucket

 - Imputed – Put on Christ's perfect coat
 - Matt 22:1-13

 - Justification is a double exchange. My sin is placed on Christ, his righteousness is placed on me like a cloak.

III. The Personal Importance of Justification

- The struggle for eternal assurance and personal identity are one and the same.
 - “What we are all looking for, is an ultimate verdict that we are important and valuable. We look for that ultimate verdict every day in all the situations and people around us. And that means that every single day, we are on trial. Every day, we put ourselves back in a courtroom. that the problem with self-esteem - whether it is high or low - is that, every single day, we are in the courtroom. Every single day, we are on trial. That is the way that everyone's identity works. In the courtroom, you have the prosecution and the defence. And everything we do is providing evidence for the prosecution or evidence for the defence. Some days we feel we are winning the trial and other days we feel we are losing it. But Paul says that he has found the secret. The trial is over for him. He is out of the courtroom. How can that be? Here is Paul's answer: he is out of the courtroom, he is out of the trial. How? Because Jesus Christ went on trial instead. Jesus went into the courtroom. He was on trial. He was struck, beaten, put to death. Why? As our substitute. He took the condemnation we deserve; He faced the trial that should be ours so that we do not have to face any more trials. So I simply need to ask God to accept me because of what the Lord Jesus has done. Then, the only person whose opinion counts looks at me and He finds me more valuable than all the jewels in the earth" – Tim Keller

- Justification takes us out of the courtroom
 - "If he (the devil) faces me with my sins, I reply: "Dear devil, I have heard the record. But I have committed far more sins which do not even stand in your record. Put them down too. . . I am a Christian of the same flesh and blood as is my Lord Christ, the Son of God. Settle your account with him" – Martin Luther

- Justification means the verdict has already fallen in our favor.
 - “When I sin, God feels no wrath in His heart against me. His heart is filled with nothing but love for me, and He longs for me to repent and confess my sins to Him, so that He might show me the gracious and forgiving love that has been in His heart all along. God does not require my confession before He desires to forgive me. In His heart He already has forgiven me; and when I come to Him to confess my sins to Him, He runs to me (as it were) and is repeatedly embracing and kissing me even before I get the words of my confession out of my mouth!” – Milton Vincent

IV. Conclusion

- Do we feel like we still need to do penance? God’s words of absolution were already spoken over us at the Cross!