

Romans 3:19-28 – Justification By Faith

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The most important reason godly men sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church in the 1500's was the church's error on the teaching of justification. The Roman Catholic Church taught that faith was mental agreement with the doctrines and work of Christ. Since mental agreement is a work, Roman Catholics believed and continue to believe that God must then reward a person's agreement with grace. This is why Roman Catholics believe you are progressively 循序渐进 justified over time. Good men could not ignore this foundational error, so they worked hard to remedy 补救 it – to bring Reform. They knew that without a right view of faith and justification, the Roman Catholic Church had ceased to be a true church of Jesus Christ. The Roman Catholic Church rebuffed 碰壁 the efforts of these reformers, refused to return to orthodoxy, and burned some of these men at the stake. With a failure to reform the church, the faithful men began to leave and they formed themselves into another church – the Reformed Church...of which you are a part today.

We will study this doctrine of “justification by faith” rather than “justification by works” today.

Now I am not speaking on this topic because I want to get nostalgic 怀旧 I am speaking on this topic because the error of the Roman Catholic Church is becoming prevalent 流行 again today...and we need to guard the Lord's church. We are called Overseers in the church – and we must crush the head of this false doctrine as it raises its head again.

Our headings are: **Justification by faith: What is it? Justification by faith: How do you get it? Justification by faith: How do you respond?**

Our goals are: **That you will forever be thankful for your justification through faith in Jesus Christ and that you will become a faithful servant of the one who declared that you are righteousness.**

Justification by Faith – What is it?

1. Justification is a legal declaration 法律上的声明 by God that a person is legally free from guilt or fault and that that person is therefore acceptable in God's sight. A justified person, in the legal sense, is as innocent as Adam when he was created. The justified person is treated just as if he had never sinned and is given all the rights and privileges as sons of a holy God. “Justification” is a forensic 法律上 term – based on legal standing.

2. What is faith? Faith is the means by which you receive what God offers to you. Faith is like a hand. Faith is a taker – it is a noun. (Therefore faith is not rewarded...justification is rewarded.)

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Faith must have an object. Jesus is your object. You receive him. Faith is a gift, so it means you have no right to it. Some people today give the impression that someone is justified when God sees faith working in him and God is therefore compelled 被迫 to reward that person. They believe that one is not saved by faith but by his covenant faithfulness – by his actions. They teach that faith includes works. This is a dangerously false doctrine that is close to the Roman Catholic doctrine and it robs Christ of his glory. You are not saved by faith itself 你不是被言心本身所救. It is what you receive by faith...the person and work of Jesus Christ...that saves you. Through faith God declares you righteous...and he imputes 外加 Christ's righteousness to you.

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

3. There are 2 ways to be justified that you can see from the Bible.

a. The legal method – being justified by works.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them (laws) shall live by them."

If one perfectly obeyed the law, he is justified before God. But this is only a theoretical way, for by the law no one is justified. No one is able or willing to keep the whole law. The phrase “do this and live” might be appealing 吸引人, but it is not possible to obey God's law perfectly. You see this clearly from Rom. 3:1-19. Adam failed miserably and so do you. Those who argue that men earn salvation by keeping God's law see salvation as a wage – or a merit – something they deserve – and so they rob God of the glory and worship. Salvation is of the Lord alone. This is what the Reformers fought against. The Roman Church taught that you were saved by your on-going justification...which

was work... so even baptism adds to your salvation.

b. The Gracious method – being justified by faith. If you read to the end of Chapter 11 you will see this. The Apostle Paul went into details of “justification by faith.” He illustrated “justification by faith” by pointing to the life of Abraham. He eloquently and carefully defended “justification by faith.” In fact, this was the main point of the whole Letter to the Romans. He even began in Chapter 1:17 saying that the “just live by faith.” His point: You do not earn your justification... God gives it by grace. Faith is a gift of God 信心是来自神的恩赐 And you receive by faith what he offers.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD **does not impute iniquity** 不算他有罪的 And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

You sins were imputed to Christ...and his righteousness was imputed to you. What does “impute” mean? “Impute” means to set something in someone’s account and count is as his. The thing in that person’s account is legally his...and no one can claim it to take it back...even if he owned it before. (You see another reason why one cannot lose his salvation – once you have it, it is yours forever. Sadly, Arminians rob themselves of this grace.)

Justification by faith: How do you get it?

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even (which is) the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

1. From Adam in the Garden of Eden, to the last soul who receives Jesus’ life and death before he returns, is and will be justified by faith in him. And you receive justification because you have **knowledge in what Christ has done** and **confidence in God that he will give it to you - faith.**

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

2. All men-Jews and Gentiles have sinned. So none of you has any basis of justification 称义的根本 Not one Jew or Gentile, can be declared righteous through his obedience or personal righteousness. No name recognition gives you any credit. You could be from the Tribe of Judah...it means nothing...or a neighbor of Jesus...or could have been baptized by a bishop...you still have to have faith in Jesus Christ. Your Granddad could have been the greatest preacher of all times...it does not justify you. You only have a right standing before God when you receive his gift... God’s standards are above your ability to meet.

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

3. **Jesus became legally responsible for your sins**, so all who look to Jesus are justified by his grace.

He redeemed you by his blood and you received what he has done by faith.

2Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance 忍耐的心 God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

4. **Jesus Christ fully 完整 completely 完全 totally 完备 satisfied God’s justice** when he offered himself as

a sacrifice for your sins on the cross. God’s justice –God’s wrath was poured out on Jesus Christ...so God could then justify you. Jesus Christ propitiated the Father for you 向父神免回了你 This means he appeased an angry God...and made God turn aside from his wrath. Jesus Christ did not die to satisfy the Devil – the Christus Victor theory 基督得胜者观 Jesus Christ did not die to be a good example to man – the Moral Influence theory 道德影响论 He satisfied God’s anger...so God would and could justify you.

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma 馨香的供品

Jesus Christ was not just using “white-out” and typing over...he removed the bad records fully.

5. **God’s justice does not deny God’s love.** Many speak of “salvation by love” and quote John 3:16, but you must also see salvation through God’s justice also. You cannot be justified without God’s justice being met. This is why you don’t sing about God’s love only. When you ignore his justice

you are likely not to have a full sense of the greatness of your salvation. You don't see what you really deserved. Even during the time of the Reformation this balance between love and justice was a struggle to get. Calvin was famous for keeping this balance. Others tended to lean on one side or the other. Luther leaned toward God's love, Zwingli leaned more toward God's justice. Even today, Dispensationalists时代论者 like to draw the distinction between justice and love/mercy by saying justice was Old Testament and love/mercy is New Testament. I hope that is not even a question in your mind...believers throughout history历史 are only justified through faith in Jesus Christ – 1 time for all times...when he faced the justice of God because of his love for you.

Justification by Faith: How do you Respond?

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

1. Stop boasting停止自吹自擂 in your own abilities. Know that because you are justified by faith in Jesus Christ's and his work you have no ground for boasting. Jesus Christ lived a holy life for you. He moaned, sweated, bled, and died for you. You didn't and couldn't keep the law. You couldn't live a good and pleasing life. You couldn't even take the punishment to save yourself.

Illustration: The ancient Chinese character for "righteousness" is composed of two separate characters -- one standing for a lamb, the other for me. When "lamb"羊羔 is placed directly above "me我" a new character – "righteousness義" is formed. It is the Lamb of God that makes you clean. Based on this, you can confidently claim that without faith it is impossible for you to be justified. You needed the Lamb of God to become clean. Not even the godly Abraham, the father of all who believe, could boast about his good works. Eph 2:9

Romans 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

In fact, all Abraham could do was look forward for the coming of his Son, Jesus Christ, who would be the ground of his justification.

2. Boast in the Lord.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Conclusion:

Justification is a legal declaration by Jehovah that you are free from all your sin and imputed with the righteousness earned by Jesus Christ...and you receive this by faith – the hands of your soul. God then looks at you as if you had never sinned. He can never bring any charges against you. He cannot send you to hell. But: No Christ, no justification. No justification, you are still in your sins and will die and go to hell.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Praise God** that he did for you through Jesus Christ what you could not do for yourself – but what you needed. You were imputed with the sinfulness of your first father and all your fathers following. But now you have the righteousness of Christ imputed to you...What now?

Boast in the Lord – never be ashamed to say what Jesus Christ did for you. Watch how you talk about yourself. **Humble your hearts** before him. **Serve him well.**

Finally, consider Luke 18:11 *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners勒索 unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.'" Is this your attitude? That is an attitude that will bring eternal death. Instead, receive forgiveness for your sins that is freely offered to you through Jesus Christ. You can only be justified by faith.*