

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- It’s the basic question of the whole Bible — both testaments.
- **how can you be forgiven?** How can a holy God forgive sinful men? How can a righteous Judge pardon guilty criminals? How can God accept you?
 - Luke 18 gives us really a summary story of TWO people >> two classes of individuals.
- God Himself self-identified as the LORD, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love, he forgives iniquity, transgression and sin **yet he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished** (Ex 34.6-7)! SO>>> **How can he forgive yet punish the guilty?**
- JOB 9.2 - how can a man be in the right before God? [ע.מ.ד.ל.א.נ.ש.ו.מ.ה.י.צ.ד.ק.]
 - Job 4.17 - can man be just before God? [האָנוּשׁ מֵאֵלֹהִים יָדֹק?]
 - Job 25.4 - how can a man be just with God? [י.י.צ.ד.ק.]
- It really is **THAT** important. You get it right, you get the gospel right; you get *justification* wrong, you get the entire *gospel* wrong!
- **Justification** is the high skyscraper of Christian theology - it’s the central, towering & essential cornerstone of our Faith.
 - LUTHER SAID: “The loss of the doctrine of justification involves the loss of ALL Christian doctrine”
- A few summarizing points on justification
 1. Justification is **FORENSIC** (a legal declaration)
 2. Justification is **FREE** (unmerited)
 3. Justification is **INSTANTANEOUS** (in a moment)
 4. Justification is **POSITIVE** (reckons ALL Christ’s work to you)
 5. Justification is **COMFORTING** (gives indomitable joy)
- *O to imagine* we are convicted criminals brought into God’s courtroom. He’s behind the bar with perfect righteousness who must execute inflexible justice. You’re guilty. You’re a lawbreaker. You’re a felon. **○ the joy** of being forgiven. **○ the wonder** of your full pardon graciously declared. **○ the marvel** of being declared **righteous** & holy. **○ the comfort** of having *full, everlasting, unfading* justification. **○ the assurance** of having God’s countenance change toward you from your overwhelming guilt to your justified acceptance. **○ the bliss** of having God’s own *perfect righteousness* instantly reckoned to your account so you stand faultless & accepted! ***O let this capture and recapture and then again, let it capture your heart!***

Background to Titus 3

- Paul gives God's work of gospel (vv.4-7) to equip, motivate & remind believers as to *how* to live in secular society. **This is FUEL** for godly living in a harsh society!
- v.4 - it all begins with God's initiative
- v.5 - God saves us NOT by our works but his own mercy
- v.5b - God regenerates us (changes our heart/gives a new nature)
- v.6 - all through Jesus Christ our Savior who is RICHLY given by God!
- **what happens next? What does GOD do at this point? v.7...**

THESIS — I want to provide for you CRYSTAL CLARITY on JUSTIFICATION so that you'll (1) understand it; (2) delight with assurance in it; and (3) defend it; and (4) be DIE for this if needed.

We'll see the timing, the meaning, the accomplisher, the obtaining, the results of justification!

I. THE TIMING OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (6-7)

A. Theologians call this the *Ordo Salutis* -- order of salvation.

1. **Regeneration:** God works salvation in us & *changes us, converts us. *it's God opening your heart & giving you life.*

2. **Response:** then, the convicted sinner, now enlightened and convicted is sovereignly converted & responds in genuine repentance & faith. *This is you now seeing your sin, seeing Christ's beauty & fleeing to Him in TURNING to him.*

3. **Declaration:** then, when the sinner believes on Christ alone, God justifies him by grace.

B. Titus 3 context; Rom 8.28-30

II. THE MEANING OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7)

• Deut 25.1 - go to court and justify the righteous and condemn the wicked [*brings us to the location of the court-room, a legal setting with a Court: a Judge, a Bar, a Law, a Sentence*]

A. The language of 'justify' in OT and NT refers to a legal, forensic action; it's declaring to be righteous. **It is** = forensic, law-court, judicial term. **And the setting** = the divine court room of heaven

1. Justification means to **DECLARE OR PRONOUNCE TO BE RIGHTEOUS** (Murray)

2. When God justifies, he declares us to be forgiven of sin, cleared of its penalty & righteous in His sight. It's something that is **TRUE** about us on the outside (=objectively/outside of us). He declares that we are right/righteous in the sight of His law. ***NOT** by our works but in Christ & in his obedience (Rom 4)

3. In the CFBC catechism: justification is God's forgiving sinners & declaring them *legally righteous* in Christ.

B. Justification is what God **declares** about the believer, not about what God **changes** in the believer [that inward change is regeneration]. It is an instantaneous act of God, not a progressive process before God.

C. What is the ***ground*** the ***reason*** we're justified? The atoning work of Christ -- his obedience to the law & his blood shed for our sins. It's a two-fold nature. **GOD** reckons/declares us **RIGHTEOUS** b/c (1) he **IMPUTED/reckoned/accounted ALL** of our sins to Christ and (2) he **IMPUTED/reckoned ALL** of Christ's righteousness to us.

1. When God justifies: he forgives us our sin, reckons all our sin to Christ & punishes *HIM* in our stead & then reckons the very righteousness of God in Christ to *OUR* account (so that we are fully righteous, accepted and pure before Him). In justification: God hasn't changed us but it's the Heavenly Judge's declaration about us.

III. THE ACCOMPLISHER OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7)

- A. Every word, every jot, every stroke of biblical Truth is vital. Note the verbal *form* [δικαιωθέντες]
- B. v.7 - passive, having *been justified* [implied: by GOD]
 1. Rom 8.33 - GOD is the one who justifies; Rom 8.30 - those whom He called *He justified*.
- C. one place where men justify men is in Luke 16.15 when men justify themselves in the sight of men but God knows their hearts & their hypocrisy is abominable.
 1. It's not *God and men*; God & our works; Salvation is accomplished by God & we are justified *by God alone* and the way it's received (instrument/means) is *thru faith*.
 2. We're not saved b/c of our works or b/c of our faith. CHRIST saves us! We are justified as we look to Christ savingly. God justifies; He saves; v.5 - he saved us!

IV. THE OBTAINING OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7)

- In contrast to the RCC --
 - "RCC teaches that salvation thru faith PLUS works. People can obtain for their own salvation and at the same time cooperate in saving their brothers thru good works and indulgences (CC 1477 and 1479)
 - RCC teaches that "We can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life" (RCC 2027)
- A. by His grace // thru faith -- being justified is FREELY offered.
- B. By God's grace (Rom 3.24; Titus 3.7*) - *Grace alone*.
- C. thru faith (Gal 2.16; Rom 3.28) -- *Faith alone*.
- D. Like a city in the ancient world that needed water. They weren't saved by the aquaduct that carried the water from the spring to the city. Rather, the aquaduct is simply the channel that brings the water to the city. So it is in justification. Faith doesn't save you any more than the aquaduct saved the city; it is the channel by which you enjoy the benefits of the FOUNTAIN of justification & all the benefits God gives therein.
 1. WA Ogden wrote in his hymn:

*Look and live, my brother, live; Look to Jesus now and live.
Tis recorded in His Word, Hallelujah, It is only that you look and live!*

V. THE RESULTS OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7-8)

- This work of God results in us being *heirs* of eternal life (everlasting security in heaven)
- No one is justified by his good works; but all who are justified will live in good works.
- A. v.8 - good deeds/ James 2 - good works -- you're not saved *by* good works but you're saved *for* good works.
- B. Some inevitable outflows of this great fountain! *Like the firework* that is launched & then all the beautiful colors, designs, shapes, sizes all gloriously appear. *So it is w/ justification!*
 1. Peace with God (Rom 5.1)
 2. No condemnation (Rom 8)
 3. Righteous before God (Rom 4;5-6; 2 Cor 5.21)

4. Cleansed of all sin (1 Cor 6.11)
5. Go home everlastingly changed (Luke 18.14--δεδικαιωμένος)
6. Spared from divine wrath (Rom 5.9)
7. Guarantee of glory (Rom 8.30)

O this doctrine demands your doxology!

This declaration calls for your devotion!

1. Let your justification **ignite PRAISE!**
2. Let your justification **prompt THANKSGIVING!**
3. Let your justification **propel EVANGELISM!**
4. Let your justification **instill HUMILITY!**
5. Let your justification **solidify ASSURANCE!**

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- 16th c. England were dark days for those who believed what the Bible says about justification by faith alone. JOHN HOOPER was a minister of England.
 - When Bloody Mary took the throne, John Hooper was the 2nd man to be burnt at the stake. He was one of the first men she marked out for destruction.
- He wrote & proclaimed>>>
 - That every minister must diligently teach and preach the **justification** of man to come only by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the merit of any man's good works, albeit that good works do necessarily follow justification, the which before justification are of NO value or estimation before God. > *this is our hope, our assurance & tower of Refuge!*