

Justified by Faith Alone

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Date: 12 October 2023

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- [0 : 00] I'm going to begin our service singing to God's praise from Psalm 72. Psalm 72 from the beginning of the psalm.
- O Lord, thy judgments give the King, his Son, thy righteousness. With right he shall thy people judge, thy poor with uprightness.
- The lofty mountains shall bring forth unto the people peace. Likewise the little hills the same shall do by righteousness.
- The people's poor ones he shall judge, the needy's children save. And those shall he in pieces break, who them oppressed have.
- They shall thee fear, while sun and moon do last through ages all. Like rain on mown grass he shall drop, or showers on earth that fall.
- [1 : 01] The just shall flourish in his days, and prosper in his rain. He shall, while death the moon endure, abundant peace maintain.
- His large and great communion shall from sea to sea extend. It from the river shall reach forth unto earth's utmost end.
- We can sing these verses, Psalm 72 from the beginning to the read. O Lord, thy judgments give the King, his Son, thy righteousness. O Lord, thy judgments give the King, his Son, thy righteousness.
- O Lord, thy goodness, thy people judge, thy pure with uprightness.
- The lofty man shall bring forth unto the people peace.
- [2 : 34] The lofty man shall bring forth unto the people.
- The lofty man shall bring forth unto the people.
- They shall appear, while sun and moon do last through ages all. While sun and moon do last through ages all.
- The wind shall turn to the people. The sea shall drop, while sun and moon do last through ages all. The sea shall drop, while sun and moon do last through ages all.
- The sea shall not fire, while sun and moon do last through ages all. The sea shall fall, while sun and moon do last through ages all. The sea shall flow, while sun and moon do last through ages all.
- [4 : 30] He shall while round the manager upon the peace maintain whose large and great communion shall from sea to sea extend if from that river shall reach forth a dear that was gained.
- Amen. I'm going to hear God's word as we find it in Paul's epistle to the Romans in chapter 8.
- Romans chapter 8. We shall read from verse 22 to the end of the chapter.
- For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together until now. And not only they but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit.

Even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption to wit the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope and hope that is seen is not hope.

[6 : 27] For the man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not then do we with patience wait for it.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

[7 : 31] Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called and whom he called them he also justified. And whom he justified them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us? 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?

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth?

It is Christ that died. Yea, rather that is risen again. Who is even at the right hand of God? Who also maketh intercession for us?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

[8 : 39] As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

and so on may the Lord add his blessing to a reading of his word. 110 from the beginning down to verse 5.

5 stanzas. The Lord did say unto my Lord sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stone where on thy feet may stand.

The Lord shall out of Zion send the rod of thy great power in midst of all thine enemies be thou the governor. A willing people in thy day of power shall come to thee in holy beauties from morn's womb thy youth like dew shall be.

[10 : 02] The Lord himself hath made an oath and will repent him never of the order of Melchizedek the Warta priest forever. The glorious and mighty Lord that sits at thy right hand shall in his day of wrath strike through kings that do him withstand.

And so on. The Lord did say unto my Lord sit thou at my right hand. The Lord did say unto my Lord sit thou at my right hand until I make thy horse a stone where on my feet may stand.

let your kingdom examine jesus All my enemies be Thou the Governor.

A willing people in Thy day of power shall come to Thee.

In holy beauties from Mars' home, Thy youth, Thy truth, shall be.

- [12 : 25] The Lord Himself has made an oath, and will repent Him never.
Of Your dead all will kiss the day of heart of Christ forever.
The glorious and mighty Lord that sits at Thy right hand.
Travelling this day of our strength through, Kings that could help this day.
Amen. Amen.
- [14 : 13] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, and so on.
It is God that justifieth. I am sure most of you will have heard of what is called the five solas.
The five solas. They are connected with the reformation and they speak to us of the place that the Lord Jesus Christ has in the salvation of sinners.
The word solas is Latin and it means by itself or alone.
- [15 : 33] So the reformers came up with this description of the way that God justifies by faith in Jesus Christ.
Faith alone, scripture alone, God's glory alone, and Christ in his righteousness alone.
And all of these things, we are going to look at each one of these things in turn, but tonight the focus is on justification by faith in Jesus Christ.
Why would we want to focus on a doctrine that you are familiar with?
Why is it necessary for us from time to time to think of something that has been established in the Reformed Church since the times of Luther and Christ?
- [16 : 57] Why would we want to focus on a doctrine that has been established in the Reformed Church since the years of Luther and Christ?
Why would we want to focus on a doctrine that has been established in the Reformed Church since the years of Luther and Christ?
I think every one of us who are familiar with the writings of the Apostle Paul understand that man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ.
And not only do we understand from what Paul teaches that man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ, but that we should not and cannot include anything else in the relationship of faith that should coexist alongside it in order to justify.
Which is why the Reformers emphasized faith alone in order to justify.
- [18 : 47] But I want us to emphasize what it is that we believe in.
I'm sure you know, I'm sure you know, but it's important for us to reflect on that because as a truth that is always under threat.
As a truth that is always in danger of being undermined because people are not happy with Scripture being the main, the only rule to direct us.
How we may glorify and enjoy God. To many today doctrine is not really relevant because what's important, they would argue, is sufficient knowledge of Christ to live in the light of his teaching, to follow his example, to follow his example, to be a good neighbour, to improve yourself as a person, be a better husband, a better wife, a better father, a better mother, to improve yourself in whatever way and imbibe the teachings of Christ and so live out your faith in that way.
And by doing that, that you are satisfying what God would expect from you as a Christian. Now, in a sense, what is being advocated there is perfectly in order.

[20 : 31] It is perfectly right for a Christian to live their life in the light of God's word, in the light of the example of Christ, to be someone who, because they are a Christian, that their life is a better lived life because of what they believe and because of the teachings that they seek to live out in their life.

But the problem many people have is that instead of believing that to be something that is expected of them and something that should be something that should be the role of life for them, they make it out that in some way this is something that they attribute to their justification.

They not only believe themselves to be doing what is expected of them, but they by so doing think that they can in some way please God.

And the belief that they are not going to be doing what is expected of them, but they are not going to be doing what is expected of them. It is far more something that they trust in than the trust that they should have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to apply the doctrines of Scripture to our lives without question. Maybe as a Christian I have heard plenty say that when you teach and when you preach, what is important and relevant is how to live out your Christian life in a practical way.

[22 : 29] How do you live out your Christianity in a way that influences others? And without question it is necessary for us as believers to do that.

So that our witness and our testimony is influential, is positive, is something that attracts others to believe what we believe.

However, if we depart from knowledge of the Scripture as intergirding what we believe, then very quickly we will move away from what is necessary to feed into what we are doing and saying and applying in our lives.

If, for example, to give a mundane illustration, if you need to do some work to your car, you depend on a mechanic to do that.

You wouldn't go to a plumber with your car because you know a car needs a mechanic to do the work that is necessary for it. You wouldn't take your car to somebody who is not trained to deal with it.

[23 : 52] You wouldn't expect any one of the trades to do any other trade but the one that they are trained to do.

Why then should you expect yourself to be a Christian who lives their life divorced from, separated from, independent of the teachings of Scripture that are necessary to feed into the way that you live your life?

It is always a dangerous state of affairs for anybody who is a Christian to live their life like that. Now, when we read here these words of the Apostle that tells us that it is God that justifieth, what question should you ask?

Just isolating that statement. What question should you ask? Now, I'm sure that you already have ample truth, plenty of truth at your disposal that will tell you why or what answer you would give to that question.

It immediately, surely stirs up in your head that there is a need to be justified. If God justifies, then surely there is a need for a person to be justified.

[25 : 35] Why is a person in need of justification? Well, because the Bible tells us that we have all sinned and come short of God's glory. And we could gather plenty of truth to evidence that sin is in our life and because it is necessary for the sinner to be justified before God.

Because at some point in our experience, we will be called to stand before that God and answer for our sin. Whatever that sin may be, however many they are.

And any person who knows themselves and knows what the scripture is telling us will understand that there is countless sin in our experience.

Countless sins in our experience that would leave us under God's condemnation. I think divines would say to us that these two words, justification and condemnation, stand shoulder to shoulder.

It is sin that brings us to condemnation. And our answer before God for our sin will leave us either condemned or justified.

[27 : 19] So what is it that we can do to be justified in the sight of God? And that is a question that rises out of the statement.

It is God that justifies. How will God justify us? And we understand from the scripture that it is God alone that is our saviour.

That he is the one that saves us from condemnation. And that is the inescapable reality of what we are confronted with as sinners.

We are exposed to the wrath of God, to the condemnation of God. And it is appointed to us once to die and then the judgment we are told.

And then we are told that salvation is all of God's grace. And that salvation is something that involves us being justified by him.

[28 : 30] Now, these questions and answers, I'm sure you have them all at your fingertips. But you can believe that there are Christians who tonight believe that what they are saved from is possibly the kind of life that leaves them to be less than desirable.

They live out a life that is not desired. They would prefer to be better than they are. And as I said before, the place that Christ has in their thinking is someone who will give them a leg up and help them to be better than they are.

And as I said by following his teaching. But salvation, as far as God is concerned, involves justification by God's hand.

And the justification by God's hand involves the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the justification is something that God does in Christ, as we've read in this chapter, that will bring the sinner into a relationship with God that does not involve them as condemned.

The kind of God that confronts us in the scripture is a God who is judge and a God who is saviour.

[30 : 22] He condemns because of sin. He saves us from our sin. And he does it by way of the Lord Jesus Christ. And while many look at God, and you know, you'll hear this language, and they want to divorce from their thinking all along any vision, any sense of God being an angry God, a God of wrath, a God who condemns them, because God is a father.

God is a father who loves his children, and his children are many, and he wants to bring them back into the fold and experience his love, and share that love with others, without thought being given to how that could possibly be.

Now we've read here that the God who justified is a God who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

The act of justification on the part of God could not have taken place without his son taking the place of his people on the cross.

Let me quote the American divine R.C. Sproul. And he's talking about something, a malaise you could say, that is in the church and the church of today.

[32 : 05] He says the great intrusion of popular culture into the thinking of the church is that people can earn the favour of God even though they are incapable of doing so.

Paul emphasizes repeatedly the effect of sin on the life of the sinner, that the sin that is in the life of the sinner has left the sinner a debtor to God, incapable of settling that debt.

Go back to the episode of Paul to the Galatians. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.

For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Now you know that Paul wrote that letter to the Galatian church, and what he confronted in the church were several things, but essentially there was this.

There were believers who had reverted back to works righteousness in order to be saved. They wanted something alongside Christ.

[33 : 43] God justified by way of Christ Jesus dying on the cross for sin and for sinners. But they reckoned that they should go back to keeping the law of God, the ceremonial law of God, keep holy days, offer sacrifices, submit to circumcision, all that would add to their status before God.

And Paul said, that's not right. That is going back to what you once were, and that is not permissible. The bottom line is, by nature we are debtors, and we cannot settle our debts.

Now the emphasis on faith alone has to do with two things. First, first a person can only be justified if faith is present.

It is God that justifies, but he justifies those who exercise faith. If you go back again, just a few verses to Romans 3, you'll find there the Apostle Paul emphasizing the need that there is to be justified.

Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

[35 : 24] You can't expect God to justify you on the basis of what you're doing, your law keeping. He tells us, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

He goes on to say, therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Faith is essential to a man's justification.

And then in verse 30, seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

By faith and through faith, doesn't matter who you are or what you are, what you once were, it is through faith and by faith that justification is possible.

possible. And we need to emphasize that. We need to bring that not only to light, but to believe upon it as those who have experienced it for ourselves.

[36 : 36] Our faith is something that is necessary in order for justification to be possible. Now, what does faith do?

Well, we understand that while faith may have many elements in it, or many ways in which we can recognize its presence, that the object of our faith is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith looks to Jesus Christ. Now, when you say that, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ must open out to your eye, because it is not just the physical person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That can't be excluded from it, because the physical person of the Lord Jesus Christ tells you that he is the incarnate one, that he took out nature, that he took a human body and a reasonable soul.

So, the eye of faith looks upon the second person of the Trinity as the God-man. He was, he is God and he is man.

[37 : 51] It takes in, the eye of faith takes in the divinity of Christ, that he is the God who is created, he is the God who is one with his Heavenly Father.

Whichever way you want to take it as you dwell upon that with your eye of faith resting upon this person. The person of Christ that is before you, he is divine and he is human.

And then, it goes broader than that, it takes in the work of Christ Jesus. You, you as a Christian must look to the person of Jesus Christ in the activity that is his as the prophet, as the priest and as the king of his people.

The offices that he fulfills as your Savior. You look with the eye of faith towards him. You look at what he has done on your behalf, on the cross.

just look at, narrow it down to, again, to the priesthood of Christ. He is the sacrifice and he is the priest who offered the sacrifice. Look at his role as intercessor.

[39 : 10] He is the one who, at the right hand of God, continues to make intercession for his people. Now, what I'm saying is, faith is active in looking upon this passion upon which your salvation depends.

And you look to him and you believe and trust in the finished work that is his. The believer is somebody who rests and receives the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of your soul.

and in so doing, you are, you are thereby experiencing the justification of God.

Professor Donald MacLeod in, well, in his writings, in his teachings, he was saying, when you think about faith, faith, he says, is an intellectual commitment, the submission of the mind to the truth of the gospel.

It is that and more, no doubt. But it must be that. Everyone who comes to that conviction that enables them to trust in him and rest in him, surrendering all their own activities as far as doing them for salvation as concerned, which is what we do by nature.

[40 : 46] I'll do this and God will be pleased with what I've done. You must put that to one side as far as your faith in Jesus Christ is concerned in your justification.

Now, as with all doctrines, as they are understood and built upon, you find them contained within the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

We know that Paul had to teach the church in Galatia because of the wrong emphasis that was being placed by the Judaizers and so on.

The epistle to the Galatians has been called many things. Some call it the charter for independence, the Christian doctrine of justification so that you're free from the bondage that you have to the laws as far as salvation is concerned.

But what about sola fides? What about faith alone? Where does that emphasis come from?

[42 : 06] Well it comes, as we said, from the scripture. It comes from the understanding that Paul had that there was no necessity for other works to be put alongside.

putting your faith in Jesus Christ. And you could say, well the scripture says that and surely that is the end of the matter. But the reformers found that it wasn't.

The reformers emphasised faith alone for salvation because within the church the church had abandoned the emphasis on faith alone.

Roman Catholicism insisted that alongside faith there would be works. Not in the sense that the Jewish believers emphasised it.

They put their own works alongside the works of the faith. Now you could, there's always a danger that you dismiss the teachings of the Roman Catholic churches.

[43 : 22] Everything they say is completely wrong. No, they understood there was a need for faith, there was a need for grace, and so on. But it's what they embroiled or entangled with it that was all wrong.

And that's what Luther saw when he was identifying God's word, through the epistle, in particular the epistle of Paul to the Galatians.

The Roman Catholic faith emphasised the need for God's grace and faith in Jesus Christ, but it didn't leave it there. It insisted that faith was to be accompanied by works.

And faith was to be accompanied with not just trust in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but in the church, so that what the church taught had equal validity to what the Bible taught.

It had to be accompanied by works righteousness and meritorious acts on their part that had every bit, you could argue, every bit as important importance as what Christ had done on their behalf.

[44 : 45] The kind of Christian, the kind of saint that you were, depended on the kind of person that you were in living out your life, which was far more than the scripture taught, and far more than God permitted the believer to be.

James Packard, just to summarize, suggested that there is this great difference between the Reformed church and the ancient church that departed from the truth.

Faith, according to Rome, he said, is just trusting the church as a teacher. where the Bible insists that faith means trusting Christ as the alone saviour, which is quite different.

If you trust in the church, what church do you trust in? How many deviant beliefs have the church presented to the people over the centuries?

How many times have successive popes made a declaration that they were speaking the truth and the truth was imbibed by the church so the people were encouraged to believe the church to the damnation of their soul because of what the truth, what they purported to be truth was.

[46 : 24] what the Bible tells you and tells me is this, is that we can only trust for the salvation that God has for us by looking to Christ and it is in him and him alone that justification is for.

The Westminster Confession puts it like this, receiving or resting on Christ and his righteousness is the alone instrument of justification.

The alone instrument of justification. But you read your confession and it says this quite interestingly. But it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces.

In other words, the emphasis for your justification is placed four square on your faith in Jesus Christ.

For your justification, faith is necessary, but it is never simply the fact that you say, I've done this so everything is fine.

[47 : 41] There are accompanying evidences, graces that God has created in the heart and mind of the person saved. That means that they are in possession of the salvation that God has prepared in Christ.

Their righteousness is what Christ has wrought for them by his obedience, obedience that they could not possibly give, because by nature they were disobedient, by nature they were lawbreakers, by nature they came short of the glory of God.

And it is ever thus. They cannot, and we cannot, and I cannot, add anything to what Christ has done for me. faith alone.

So the reason why the church, the Protestant church, the reformed Protestant church insisted on faith alone being the means by which justification God justifies the sinner is because it is faith alone.

now, I'm sure there is much more that can be said about this, but we need to remind ourselves, not only was the ancient church deviant, it went away from what God taught through his apostles very rapidly.

[49 : 14] The heresy that was in Galatia evidenced that. Then you see it again in the medieval church, departure from the truth, embracing error rather than truth.

And it is constantly feeding into the life of the church so that today many people who profess to be Christians rather than depending fully on the finished work of Christ for their salvation, they wish to accompany it with their own good works and with their own lifestyle as being, that's the way to live the Christian life.

As if this is what God requires when the reality is that what is at the heart of the Christian life is faith in Christ and obedience to him and his revealed will which is God's word.

We'll see more of that when you see the emphasis that is placed upon faith in the experience of the believer, grace in the life of the believer, Christ in the life of the believer, scripture in the life of the believer and the glory of God in the life of the believer.

All of these things individually stand alone in a sense. these are the things I can't teach you my own when it comes to scripture.

[50 : 54] I can't say, well, this is my perceived wisdom. This is what I've worked out in my Christian life and I give equal weight to it. That's not the way it works. The burden is on the world.

The burden is on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The burden is on these elements that God presents to us as the things alone which are necessary and which we embrace.

May God bless those these thoughts. Let's pray. Lord, we give thanks that your word is reminding us again and again of the provision that you have made for us in the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ and that those who put their trust in him and him alone for salvation are assured that the God who is their judge will look upon them in him and be satisfied.

We bless you and thank you for the provision made that assures us of that forgive us transgressions against the truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We'll conclude Psalm 85 I'll sing in Gaelic Psalm 85 I'll sing in verse 9 Jeremiah the Lord of God we'll take the digits on Thank you.

[53 : 17] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. May grace, mercy, and peace from God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all, no matter what always.

[55 : 17] Amen.