

Justified by God

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- [0 : 0 0] and he made sacrifices to the sins of the people. And one of those sacrifices involved the two goats. And one of those goats died and was sacrificed.
- And the other one, the scapegoat, is that wonderful model of the sin bearer, the high priest. He confessed the sins of the nation on the head of the scapegoat.
- And then that goat was led away into the desert by a man and it was set free there to live there. And Leviticus 16.22 says the goat was going to bear all their iniquities on itself to our moat area.
- Wonderful image acted out, a bit of theatre almost, showing us how Jesus was going to take away our sins.
- Hebrews tells us that all these sacrifices and ceremonies in the Old Testament were shadows of the good things that were coming.
- [1 : 1 5] They were kind of signposts looking forward to something better that was going to come. Day after day, year after year, the priests offered these sacrifices that could never take away sin, but which pointed to the true Lamb of God who, in Hebrews 10.12, which we learned is a memory verse that week, tells us, offered for sin a single sacrifice once for all.
- And then sat down at the right hand of God. Bulls and goats cannot take away sin, but Jesus did once for all. Wonderful picture of what Jesus did.
- Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away the stain. But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sins away, a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than nay.
- My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine, while like a penitent I stand and ne'er confess my sin. My soul looks back to see the burdens thou did spare when hanging on the cursed tree and knows her guilt was there.
- Believing we rejoice to see the curse removed, we bless the Lamb with cheerful voice and sing his wondrous love. So wrote Isaac Watts, the hymn writer.
- [2 : 5 9] The penalty for sin has been paid. The wrath of God for sin has been turned away once for all by our Lord Jesus Christ. And when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him to be baptized, he saw him and he said, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- All those Old Testament models and shadows have been fulfilled in Christ. But how does this apply to you and me today?
- How does the work of Christ, his death once for all, apply to me, to you? Well, it begins by God calling us to himself. We read that in Romans 8 verse 30.
- You have your Bible there. Romans 8 verse 30, we read, And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified.
- And those whom he justified, he also glorified. Those whom he predestined, he also called. God's call comes first.

[4 : 09] God always comes first. You know, in the Narnia books, I wonder how many people here have read the Narnia books. Anybody read the Narnia books?

Anybody prepared to admit they've read the Narnia books? A few people, but not the younger ones or else they're not admitting it. In the Narnia books, the two children, I've forgotten what it was, it was Eustace and somebody, Jill, they were in trouble at school and they wanted out of it and they asked to go to Narnia.

And they found themselves in Narnia. And Jill, I think it was, she'd never been there before. She met Aslan, the lion who is a model of Jesus.

And he said to her, I called you here. And she said, No you didn't. We asked to come. And he said, You wouldn't have called me if I hadn't been calling you.

You wouldn't have called me if I hadn't been calling you. And there in that story, a wonderful bit of theology, you wouldn't have called me if I hadn't called you.

[5 : 28] God's call always comes first. And God has called all through Scripture. Right in Genesis, when Adam fell and God called, He said, Where are you, Adam?

In Isaiah. Again, a verse we saw recently. Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. God calling.

Jesus himself said, Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden. Revelation 22, verse 17. The spirit and the bride say, Come.

Let him who hears say, Come. Let the one who is thirsty come. And let the one who desires take the water of life without price. You see, right from Genesis, right from the first chapters of Genesis, right through to the last chapter of Revelation, we see God is a God who calls.

And when we hear and respond, God justifies. Those whom he called, he also justifies.

[6 : 39] Now, what is the meaning of this word, justified, justification? In today's speech, we might sometimes ask somebody who's done something which we think is wrong or silly, and we might say, Can you justify what you've done?

Can you justify doing that? And what we mean is, Can you show that what you've done is right and reasonable? And in that sense, justification is me pleading my own cause.

Showing that I haven't done anything wrong. Self-justification. But that isn't what the Bible means when it talks about justification here. Justification in the Bible is God looking at me and at you, brothers and sisters, and saying, This person is not guilty.

This person is now in a right relationship with me. It's a legal term. We're in a court here. And it's a judge in a court of law saying, Not guilty.

Not guilty. I want to look at it in some detail. And I want to use the Shorter Catechism as a help here.

[7 : 54] If you've got it on the back of your notices sheet, if you've got a notices sheet there, you'll see Shorter Catechism 33. I'll not ask if anybody can repeat that. I remember it being driven into me as a teenager.

Shorter Catechism 33. What is justification? And the answer is, justification is an act of God's free grace wherein he pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

It's almost there still, but not quite. justification. That legal term to declare not guilty.

And we're going to look at that together. We're going to look at under the four points that I've given in the notice sheet. Justification is an act of God's free grace.

In justification, we're pardoned, we are credited with Christ's righteousness, and we have peace with God.

[9 : 11] Now, all these chapters in the beginning of Romans are a great explanation of justification by faith.

First point, then, I want to think about is that justification is an act of God's free grace. Now, we read those passages together in Romans 3, verse 21.

We read, Now, Now, Now, Now, Now, the law and the prophets bear witness to us the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Justification is an act of God's free grace. Again, in the other passage we read, we read, in Romans 8, 33, we read, It is God who justifies.

[10 : 29] Right? So, it's not self-justification, it's not me justifying myself, it's God who justifies. And, He did it, He does it, 3, 24, we are justified by His grace as a gift.

When we say something is by grace, that means it's through the undeserved favour of God. Right? We don't deserve it.

It's by grace alone. It's not our own efforts. We don't come to God and say, Look, I've done the best I can. Isn't that good enough? Surely, that's all you can expect.

No. No. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight. And we don't come to God and say, I'm a nicer person than lots of people.

Surely, that's all you can expect. No. Not at all, for by the works of the law shall no one be justified. Keeping the rules will never, ever make us right with God.

[11 : 47] We can't do it because our own efforts always fall short of God's standards. We can't even make ourselves a little bit better by our own efforts.

As if we could lift ourselves a little bit and then God will pick us up and pick us on up. No. We can't do anything. I like to think of this as the psalmist wrote in Psalm 40 when he said, the Lord took me from a fearful pit and from a marily clay and set my feet upon a rock establishing my way.

An inner sin with a sinner in the fearful pit in the clay. And with vertical signs as it were, we can't get out of it. And the more we struggle to get out of it, the dirtier we become.

So we just can't do it. But God comes and he reaches down and he lifts us out of that fearful pit and he justifies us when we have faith in Jesus.

Because again looking at Romans 3 and 26 we read it was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

[13 : 14] It is when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus that we are justified. That God can look at us and say I'm not guilty.

When God calls us as he does and we respond in faith he forgives our sin all because of what Jesus has done. All that Jesus did and all that he achieved on the cross becomes ours.

Did Jesus pay the price for sin? He did. Did he pay the price for my sin? He did. Did Jesus by his death offer one sacrifice for sin for all time?

He did. Then there's no need for more sacrifices. There's nothing I can do to add to what Jesus has done. nothing I could do to add to what Jesus has done.

The work of redemption is finished and when we're justified by faith the work of redemption is applied to our hearts. Isaiah explained it so well.

[14 : 25] Turn with me if you will in Isaiah chapter 53. Isaiah 53. Let's read those words written 700 years before Jesus was born.

I'm reading from verse 5. I'll read from verse 4.

Surely he has borne our grace and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted. But wonderful biblical but he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was a chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And down at verse 11 there out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities.

In the NIV that's translated he will justify many. By his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant justify many.

[15 : 58] So there we have it promised in Isaiah 53 we are justified. An act of God's free grace. we are pardoned and act again pardoned from our sins. But we are also accepted as righteous in God's sight.

Wherein he pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in his sight. Now how can God accept me a sinner as righteous in his sight?

Well the catechism answers it for us. It says only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

This is one of the great truths of our salvation. One of the great truths of justification. When we say God has imputed Christ's righteousness to us to those who know Christ we are saying that Christ's righteousness is considered as belonging to his saved people.

[17 : 16] When we are justified we are credited with Christ's righteousness. Now this is banking terminology. We have left the law courts and now we are in the bank.

And my bank account of righteousness is empty. There is nothing there. But when I came to Christ trusted him received him as my saviour the righteousness of Christ was credited to my account.

You know at the end of every month if you are in a salary job your salary is credited to your account. This isn't a salary this is a great gift and it's credited to our accounts.

There's nothing there. Nothing there. But Christ's righteousness which is perfect and complete fully fulfills the demands of God he gives it to us.

You see there's a wonderful exchange here. A wonderful exchange. Jesus takes our sin. He takes our sin on himself. He took it on himself on the cross and he gives us his righteousness.

[18 : 38] Again turn with me in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 21. Let's read that verse. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21.

Here we read of this wonderful exchange.

For our sake he that is God made him that is Jesus to be sin who knew no sin so in him we might become the righteousness of God.

God made him Jesus to be sin so we might become the righteousness of God. You see on the cross when Jesus took our sins our sins were laid on him and he was treated as if he had sinned our sin our sin was led to Jesus account but we we are made the righteousness of Christ his perfect righteousness is put on our account and so when God looks at us God looks at us he sees us as if we had kept his holy law perfectly what a wonderful exchange eh the filthy rags of our self righteousness and the pollution of our sin are put on Jesus and the perfect robe of his righteousness is put on us you know young people when you're at school there and you play games on a wet winter's day and you get all muddy and you come in you take off the muddy clothes and you get showered and you clean and you put on clean clothes it's all change isn't it from the muddy clothes and the mud nice and clean well that's what happens when we come to

Christ we're washed clean washed clean but we're not given our old clothes to put on we're given a new suit of clothes the clothes of a prince or a princess beautiful clothes perfect clothes the righteousness of Christ that's what he does for us that's what he does for us Jesus thy blood and righteousness my beauty are my glorious dress amidst flaming worlds in Israel with joy shall I lift up my head bold shall I stand in that great day for who ought to my charge shall lay fully absolved through thee I am from sin and fear from guilt and shame the holy meek unspotted lamb who from the father's bosom came who died for me even me to atone now for my lord and god

[21 : 40] I own the lord our righteousness you know john bunyan the writer of pilgrim's progress as he came to trust in christ he went through tremendous crises of faith tremendous crises of doubt he would spend lots of time alone in the fields in prayer wrestling with his fears and doubts and tears and in prayers and he wrote this he wrote this he said one day as I was passing into the field to pray this sentence fell on my soul thy righteousness is in heaven and with the eyes of my soul I saw Jesus at the father's right hand there I said is my righteousness so that whatever I was or whatever I was doing

God couldn't say to me where is your righteousness for it is always there right beside him I saw that it is not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse for my righteousness is Christ my righteousness is Christ now my chains fell off indeed my temptations fled away and I live sweetly at peace with God so when the catechism says we are accepted as righteous in God's sight we are because we have the righteousness of Christ those perfect clothes wonderful wedding garment that is the righteousness of Christ so we have the righteousness of Christ and finally we have peace with God catechism doesn't mention that but it's true

Romans 5 verse 1 we read there therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God Romans 8 verse 1 there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus peace with God no condemnation no fear of judgment no fear that God will be a vengeful God who will want to punish me no our righteousness is sitting at the right hand of God Jesus who brought us into God's family and given us his spirit it says Abba Father we have peace with God that's wonderful when the devil comes along and tempts us to doubt and wants to destroy our peace we can remember that no our righteousness is in heaven our righteousness is in heaven and we wear the robe of

Christ's righteousness but not only do we have peace with God we have peace from God Jesus said peace I live with you I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you let not your hearts be troubled let not do not be afraid peace with God and the peace of God in our hearts that peace which surpasses all understanding peace perfect peace in this dark world of sin the blood of Jesus whispers peace within peace perfect peace our future all unknown but Jesus we know and he is on the throne so we have peace with God because we have Jesus as our saviour and he has made that peace Jesus had it all so we have peace with God you know and we're justified justified through what he has done you know not only has

God justified us and pardoned us and credited us with Christ's righteousness all these things are part of justification giving us his peace but he's adopted us into his family and in a few weeks time next time it's my turn to be here I'm going to think about adoption what it means and what the wonder of our adoption into the family of God justification salvation by faith has been called by some people the test of a rising or a falling church the church prospers and grows when this doctrine is proclaimed and believed and announced the church withers and fails when this doctrine is neglected and forgotten may God write it on our hearts that by grace through faith we are justified when we come to

[27 : 36] Christ justification that act of God's free grace that we are pardoned we are credited with Christ's righteousness and we have peace with God may God bless his word to all our hearts tonight let's pray Lord we thank you that we come into your presence dressed in the righteousness of Christ not in our room because we don't have it but clothed in the righteousness of Christ washed pardoned credited with his righteousness father we thank you we praise you for the wonder of your gospel and the wonder of your grace to sinners like us and we thank you father that tonight this evening our righteousness is in heaven thank you

Lord write your word Lord on all our hearts thrill our hearts again I pray with the wonder of our salvation for we pray Lord in Jesus name Amen Amen Closing Psalm is Psalm 51 in Sing Psalms it's on page 67 and we're going to sing verses 1 to 9 it's a psalm of where the psalmist is praying for forgiveness praying for forgiveness and the wonder is we know that when we come to him praying this prayer he receives us in his infinite compassion he washes away our transgressions cleanses our iniquity and washes our sins so Psalm 51 we're going to sing 1 to 9 amen to

Podcast Fleur in to pray as to to care