**JUSTIFICATION**

In November, 1515, Martin Luther, professor of sacred theology at the University of Wittenberg, began to study the Epistle to the Romans in order to expound it to his students. The experience was to change his life. He later wrote -

I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, He justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before “the righteousness of God” had filled me with hate, now it became unto me inexpressively sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven.

**What is Justification?**

1. The word “justify” (*dikeoo*)means to clear from guilt or to declare righteous. As a result of being justified a man becomes “just” or “justified” in the eyes of God.
2. When He justifies man God is acting as a judge and is giving judgement in the case of a sinner brought before His Court. In Romans and Galatians where the truth of justification is most prominent it means more than removing the guilt of the sinner since it also involves a declaration that the person is righteous in the eyes of God.
3. Justification does not entail a removal of a believer’s capacity for sin but confers a new status or standing which means that God will not hold him answerable for his sins but will regard him as one who is “justified” and who has no sins to answer for. He is re-categorized as one who is “in Christ” and no longer “in Adam”.

**When is a sinner justified?**

1. A man or woman is justified at the moment of their salvation. When faith is placed in God He justifies the believer. The means of justification on our part is faith.

**Why does God justify sinners?**

1. God’s grace and love are the inspiration for salvation. He justifies because He desires to save man. No matter how gracious God was however He would not do anything that was wrong. Simply “letting us off” was not possible. Sin is a crime and a breach of God’s law which must be punished. The Cross is God’s solution to the problem of our guilt. In punishing His Son for our sin He is relieved of the necessity of punishing us. Having punished Christ He need not punish us too. Of course the benefit of the cross is only experienced by those who accept it. Salvation is a gift God offers. If salvation is rejected God will punish those that have rejected His offer. The fact that the Lord Jesus bore the punishment for sin in all its forms does not mean that God cannot punish a man for his own sins. On believing God the believer is given eternal life, his sins are forgiven, he receives the Holy Spirit – but central to all his blessings is the truth that God now holds him to be justified and acquitted from all guilt.

**Do justified saints behave “justly”?**

1. The ability to live righteously is quite different. The fact that God has justified us is a positional truth and has no direct bearing on our personal righteousness. However at salvation God also gives the believer a new nature through new birth, the indwelling Spirit, and written guidance in the form of scripture to assist him in his development of personal righteousness.

**Is Justification an important truth?**

1. Justification by faith was “rediscovered” by Luther and his advocacy of justification by faith was what gave birth to the Reformation. Although the Roman Catholic Church no longer sells “indulgences” and has corrected some of the more extreme examples of its corruption, it still teaches that acceptance by God does not depend exclusively on faith. It thinks justification is not a change of status but a change of character and morals.

**What about practical righteousness?**

1. Justification is sometimes used in scripture in other connections. Simeon was “just” (Luke 2:25) and Abel was “righteous” (Matthew 23:35) not because they never sinned but because their life was in relative terms righteous and just. But no one is absolutely just or righteous.

**Justification – key scriptures**

* Is the act of God

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. **Rom. 8:33**

* Under law it requires perfect obedience

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. **Romans 10:5**

* Man is unable to be justified by the law

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. **Romans 3:20**

* Is not of works

…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 . **Galatians 2:16**

* Is not of faith and works united

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. **Romans 3:28**

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* Is by faith alone.

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. **Acts 13:39**

* Is of grace.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

**Romans 3:23–26**

* Is by imputation of Christ’s righteousness.

18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

**Romans 5:18–19**

* By the blood of Christ.

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. **Rom. 5:9**

* By the resurrection of Christ.

Jesus … 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

**Romans 4:24–25**

* Frees from condemnation

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. 34 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.

 **Romans 8:33–34**