

# WHAT WE BELIEVE

## Lesson 8: WHAT WE BELIEVE ... ABOUT JUSTIFICATION

*“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”*

*Romans 3:28*

### Introduction

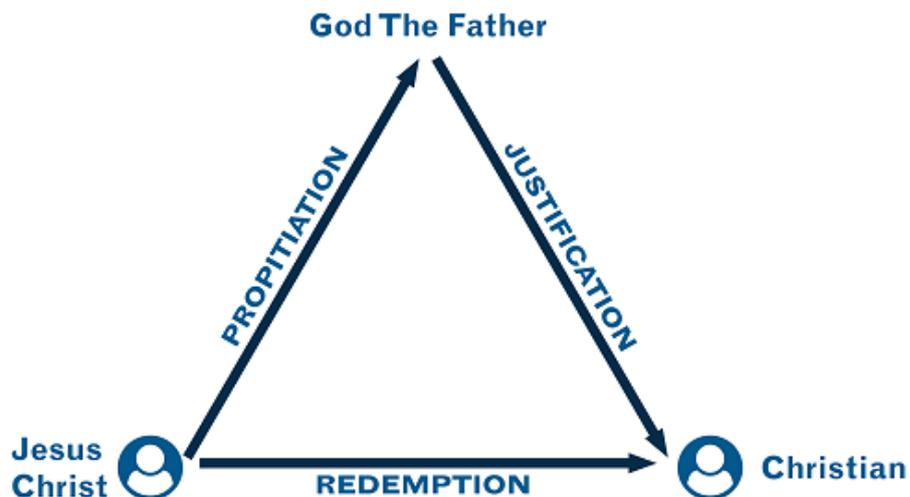
- The doctrine of Justification acts like the central support in a tent. If this doctrine falls, all other doctrines of the church fall.
- John Calvin, also one of the pillars of the Protestant Reformation, said, “Justification is the main hinge on which religion turns.”
- Puritan Thomas Watson said, “Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity. An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring is damnable.”

### Doctrinal Statement

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith alone. (Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:34; 10:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9)

## I. Justification is an act of God

- John Murray, “If we are to understand justification and appropriate its grace, we must turn our thought to the action of God in justifying the ungodly.”
- *Rom 3:22-24, All who believe ... are justified by his grace as a gift*
- *Rom 3:28, For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*
- *Rom 4:5, And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.*
- *Rom 8:33-34, It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?*



## II. Justification is full acquittal of sinners

Doctrinal Statement: Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners

- The word “justification” is a legal term that means “to declare righteous.”
- The word “acquittal” is helpful. It means a judgement or verdict that a person is not guilty of the crime with which they have been charged.
- In order to acquit someone two things must be present:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) A \_\_\_\_\_ : God is the \_\_\_\_\_ expressed through His law

- To understand justification, it is important to begin with the nature of the triune God who is the ultimate moral standard
- Mosaic law (Deut 5:6-22; Rom 7:12)
- Law of love (Matt 22:36-40)
- Law on our heart and confirmed by our conscience (Rom 2:15)
- Character of Christ, tempted in every way ... yet without sin (Heb 4:15)

(2) A \_\_\_\_\_ : Humanity is guilty

- As human beings, created in God's image, we are morally responsible and accountable before God
- *Ps 51:4, Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.*

(3) A Dilemma: How can a person be right with God?

- On the one hand:
  - *Prov 17:15, He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.*
  - *Ex 23:7, for I will not acquit the wicked*
- On the other hand:
  - *Rom 4:5, And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly*

### III. Justification is on the basis of Christ's obedience and work

Doctrinal Statement: "... full acquittal for sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ,

- *Is 53:6, All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

- *Rom 8:1, There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*
- *Rom 8:33-34, Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?*
- *Is 61:10, I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,*
- *2 Cor 5:21, For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

#### **IV. Justification is received through faith**

*Doctrinal Statement: Who believe in Christ ... they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith alone.*

- *Rom 3:28, For we maintain that a man is justified by [through] faith apart from works of the Law*
- *Rom 4:4-5, Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.*

#### **V. Justification and works**

- **Two types of works**
  - *Eph 2:8-10, For by grace you have been saved through faith ... not a result of works [negative], so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works [positive], which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- **Two types of Justification**
  - Declarative sense – To declare someone as righteous
    - *Rom 4:3, For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."*
  - Demonstrative sense – To show someone is righteous
    - *James 2:20-24*

#### **Practical Application:**

- (1) *We can offer genuine hope to unbelievers*
- (2) *We can have genuine peace as believers (Rom 5:21; 8:1)*