

# Justification

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Now like for a little just for a little while this evening to look at Particularly the section from verse 21 righteousness through faith Verse 21 to the end of the chapter And the doctrine that is contained therein That we are justified by faith alone, but before doing that I want you to Engage your minds what which you will do anyway, of course as you listen to the sermon, but engage your mind engage your Imaginations just for a moment, okay Are you all engaged?

Good, and I want you all to be as you can imagine yourselves transported By some amazing means to the day of judgment Okay, so I want you all to imagine yourselves in the day of judgment standing before God and You as an individual are ushered Into God's presence And maybe for the first time ever You appreciate how holy Holy God is There's that picture in Isaiah 6 when Isaiah meets with God and he is so holy That he doesn't know what to do. He can't stand in his presence. He is so absolutely Powerful pure Good but scary fearful absolutely terrifying and

He is so holy That you just can you imagine that you just want to run away You want to run from his presence because maybe again for the first time you've fully understood What it is to be a sinner to be unclean and you feel out of place very out of place before his Amazing holiness And We will clearly you will clearly understand and I will clearly understand how much We fall short of his glory It's as if we would feel it on that day absolutely that you're rightly standing before him when you feel condemned and Subject to his justice And even an enemy of him because of that and you can accept that guilt

You can see his justice and you're not arguing against it. It's absolutely clear for you to see and you bow your head expecting the verdict and the declaration of Being separate from him But in that moment of silence There's a break in the cry and God from the throne looks at you and says innocent You're innocent You're forgiven Your debt has been paid more than that you are righteous You're as righteous as God in that moment And more than that He comes off his throne and bows low to where you are and Hand you

Adoption papers and says you're my child You're part of my family Welcome to my heavenly home And in many ways that is the reality of What justification is here and now for every Christian The scenario that I spoke of there kind of as we look forward into the last day of judgment That scenario has already taken place for the Christian the Moment that they believed and that's the doctrine that I would like to look at for for a few minutes this evening that through faith in Jesus Christ and Trust in Jesus Christ and through all that he has done He has already taken our guilty verdict and we receive his innocence and that verdict has been brought forward and

[ 4 : 5 3 ] The moment we believe we are justified as he says verse 24 We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by the Christ Jesus by Christ Jesus Because justification is a legal term. It's a legal verdict It's a legal declaration from the judge It's not a feeling. It's not an emotion. It's not a Description of us as much as a legal declaration made by God that we are made innocent and We are declared innocent by him and our status has been changed forever from guilty to innocent at the moment that we believed so, you know no matter how Undramatic our moment of conversion is or even how little we understand

The moment of when it happened and when it may be seemed to be very gradual for us There was a moment in God's in God's calendar and God's time and God's event calendar when we were moved from a place of death to a place of life from a place of guilt to a place of innocence because of our faith because of Jesus Christ and through our faith in him And that's a wonderful reality for us because the moment we believe our our eternal perspective and perspective has changed completely and It's important for us to remind ourselves of that truth our salvation is secure We can't lose that declaration we can't move away from that and no longer or move from life back to death that is a reverse process that is not accounted for in God's particular diet of assembly of salvation for us and I just want to notice several points briefly for us this evening which are important to encourage us and to build up our faith and to understand what God has done for us. I think it's important to remember that this doctrine of justification reminds us of the reality of God's wrath God's judgment rather unpopular concept for us in these days when we don't really like to be judged by anyone and

We find ourselves only wanting to to be judged really by our own standards and not by anyone's particularly not by a God that we we feel sometimes that we can't see Ephesians 2 3 reminds us of that very clearly like the rest we were by nature objects of God's wrath Because he's a just God and we had rebelled against His goodness and His perfection and His lordship over our lives both in our first parents and then in our own lives both in birth and in behavior and There is an inevitability about God's judgment against sin and his wrath is just and settled justice and wrath against sin and that's a good thing

That's a good thing in this world of evil and destruction and pain and misery and injustice because we know and we celebrate the fact that God reminds us that it is not random evil that is happening and that people will not and society will not and Satan will not get off with evil and injustice and brutality and sin and the Bible is full of warnings that remind us of that and it's Imperative for us not to just bury our heads in the sand about that and and trifle with God as if He is the God of our back pocket He's a God that is Our servant our slave Rather than the God of the universe objectively Yes spiritually, but objectively he is God he lives outside of this world, but he is sovereign over this world

He is a spirit, but he is a sovereign spirit and He is tangible and he is real and he is a person and he is a God who is Just and perfect and good and is the one tomb we were accountable We sung that in the some of the Psalms that we were singing and that is an important concept for us For people to stand before God in the day of judgment and not be covered in the blood of Christ symbolically not to be justified freely by God's grace that comes through Jesus Christ is a truly and utterly terrifying thought for people and So when we're praying for our three friends Over this 50-day period who are not Christians. We want to keep that in mind That we're praying for something that is absolutely fundamentally crucially important for them

[11:10] That this doctrine reminds us that We need to be justified. We need to be declared innocent. We can't do it on our own it's not something we can just roll up into God's presence and play a kind of Rather Scrabbly hand before him and say well you accept me on this basis of what I've tried because he has given us his son and however loving or Significant or nice our friends are and Many of them are much nicer and much more loving and much more significant than we are than I am That without Jesus Christ they're in a perilous position They will potentially mock that But we hope through our lives and through our witness and through our sincerity and through our care That they will come to see that we have a relationship with this living God through Jesus Christ that gives us a solemnity what a joy of course, but also a willingness to look beyond the week and the weekend and

See a broader picture and come to more Fundamental conclusions about the reality of life and the reality of evil And of good and of Christ and of what he claims So it is a reminder of the perilous position we are in without Christ. I think probably certainly speaking for myself growing up in a Christian home Hearing that truth all the time we do take it for granted So there is that reminder also we're reminded that our salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone this righteousness verse 22 From this righteousness from God that is in other words. It's not a righteousness is based on the law Doing good things from the law this righteousness. He says comes from God Sorry from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe That's a great verse. It's an absolutely stunning statement and it's stunning in its simplicity

It's stunning and it's overarching truth that the gift of righteousness have been justified Through faith in Jesus Christ it comes to everyone who believed it's all of Jesus So, you know, we must maintain in our Christian lives the centrality of Jesus don't wait not just in our own lives not just in our own relationship, but in our own theology and in our own defense of that theology This is Fundamental and absolutely crucial. We can't move away from that to something else to some other kind of theological emphasis that emphasizes something other than Jesus Christ and being saved and justifying through Him alone. We are rescued by a Putting our faith in Him and faith in itself is His gift of God to us There's nothing in other words that we offer Towards our justification. It is from

God and it's by faith in Jesus Christ the cross is that there's no works that we can add nothing whatsoever Nothing, there's nothing that we can balance off what God has done for us and say well even just tipping the scales It's not that he goes all the way just about there and well, we've got to just tip the scales by being a good person now and again or Believing in certain things in a certain way we can do nothing to tip the scales God says, you know, he gives us the illustration of being dead and we are saved spiritually dead and we're saved Through His finish work no works whatsoever Is it hugely exclusive?

hugely exclusive so we're an exclusive group Okay, not in a proud way not in a not in a separatist way well at one level But it's exclusive in what we believe and we must never move from that Because it's not our exclusivity. It's what Jesus claims for himself and what makes sense If you know your half as I know my heart I know that there's nothing I can do to stand before God in that day and for him to accept me because of what I've done You know even my best things are Tainted by all kinds of ulterior motives that God can see into and see through and there's pride and selfishness and All of that it goes with it It's imperative that we are united to Jesus who are resting on Jesus leaning on Jesus dependent on Jesus living in relationship with Jesus

[ 16 : 22 ] So we are saved Through faith in Christ alone and that reminds us As he says, you know, we've all sinned and fall short of the glory of God There's an ongoing I believe an ongoing as well as a one-off conscious decision to leave sin and to follow Christ No one is born in other words ready for heaven because of the fall because of our Fallen sinful human natures and then because of what we do So we are ready to follow Christ and fall in sinful human natures and then because of what we do so Even if we've been brought up in a Christian home and it's kind of come gently I think we probably find that the longer we go on there's more of a conscious decision to leave sin behind and follow Jesus Christ There's an awareness and more we go on of the

The lack of innocence that there is within us and the need we have For a Savior to move so there's move. There's always this movement in our lives from self to Christ And our union with Christ We are justified and made right and we are then united with Christ that union with Christ provides for our holiness In other words, we are justified through our faith in Jesus But works of righteousness will follow Our faith in Jesus So we will do works of righteousness. We will follow Jesus. We will obey him Because that will be the natural trajectory of our lives Because that is where our heart has been moved and changed Towards towards serving him and loving him. So we're made right

We are made right by Jesus But we will walk right with Jesus and follow him So it's not that you know that we're made right with Jesus and justified and then we go What doesn't matter how we live can live anyway. I'm justified. I'm forgiving. I'm free But rather the union with Christ The union that we have with him provides for a walk of holiness And if we have no interest in holiness And no interest in obedience We need to challenge our hearts Under what we think our union with Christ is So we're we're reminded the reality of God's wrath that we're reminded that We are saved through Christ alone and we're also reminded here In verse 25 that it is Christ's actual work on the cross That that justifies as God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement

Very clear language. This language is disputed by some in the church As they want to move away from the idea of a god of wrath Who pours out justice on his own son forgetting that God himself is triune and he's intimately involved in the solution And the pain of that solution and the depth of love that drives that solution But is Christ's actual work that justifies as God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith In his blood he did this to demonstrate his justice because in his forbearance He left the sins committed beforehand unpunished It's a sacrifice of atonement and through that work we are justified By what he's done in Galatians 3:3 it says Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law By becoming a curse for us for it is written cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree And so this this part of the work that goes right through and we've been looking at it all the way through Hebrews in our morning worship

Which reminds us of the preparation of the people to understand the separation and the The need for Someone to come and to die And to shed his blood for without the shedding of blood. There's no forgiveness of sins And it was the work that Christ did on the cross historically There Christ is a person But it's not just Christ as a person that we believe in So people will say well I follow Jesus I love Jesus. I love his teaching I love his example. I love what he taught And I love the way he interacted with people and and he's absolute there's an absolute truth At one level in that and that we followed and worshiped Jesus because he is God But if Jesus had just come and lived like that and then just kind of made his way back to heaven and I'll lift or something

[ 21 : 46 ] Then it wouldn't have been any good Because it's not just as example that we need We needed the cross That's why he came. He came to atone for us. It's absolutely crucial to our understanding of who Jesus is Not that he's just a nice guy He is But that he is the redeemer. He's the atoning sacrifice from before the creation of the world This is God's plan to redeem us to himself agreed within In the mystery of the Trinity his blood was shed for us as our substitute God's wrath was on him because he hung on a tree and he took God's wrath. Isn't that Again, I know it's an old truth, but it's nonetheless a remarkable truth that he took the curse of God Or the judgment of God. We've got a different kind of understanding of the curse of God The use of the word curse maybe but the judgment of God

And he stood condemned in our place and we are bought back Redeemed bought back The price of his blood. It's a spiritual transaction You know, it's not that Jesus went to Jerusalem Wanted to rebuild the temple in some way was misunderstood ended up in a cross Uh, it was all a huge mistake and a few years later the disciples thought let's try and make a religion out of this It's it's not like that at all and as we understand the Prepared to the nature of the Old Testament the sacrificial system and and everything it reminds us this is the absolutely the crucial a fulcrum of all history what happened on the cross and we are there if we're Christians you're there because Your sins have been taken and they have been dealt with on the cross in time and in history

Uh, it is his actual work that makes a huge difference. We He receives our condemnation we receive in his in place of that we receive his goodness and his imputed righteousness That's the great thing, isn't it He takes our guilt So we stand this evening. We sit this evening. You sit this evening. I stand you sit innocent With his righteousness So God looks on us this evening and you'll think it's not a great thing to be a Christian And I know you're tired this evening and there's lots of in your mind and there's lots of distractions and We've heard this truth before but isn't that a great thing that tonight you sit as a believer And you're as righteous as Jesus Christ himself Because his righteousness is imputed to us

It's not you see the verdict from God isn't that You're guilty But I'm not going to punish you It's rather you're as innocent as my son That's how He sees us that is what justification means Is we are taken into that place of being as privileged and as innocent and as full of life As Jesus himself We recognize that great truth that we are given an inheritance It is undefiled and we have eternal life Christ is now In us we are children of God so the cross Must remain the center Of our understanding of justification and also of our understanding of ourselves and of our salvation What happened historically changes everything It's not just that Jesus died so that yeah if you choose to believe that's great if you don't

You don't It's that He specifically Achieved a salvation for every single one who will believe And that gives your life and my life as Christians a great sense of dignity and a great sense of significance and You want the cross To be central to your life To your understanding of Jesus and understanding of God and also to how we witness how we share the gospel When we share our salvation, we're not just saying to people, you know come along to church. It's a really nice lifestyle choice We're not asking people to be moral We're not telling them to give to charity We're pointing them to Jesus Christ and this amazing transaction That was one On our behalf to allow us to be forgiven and free and alive

[ 27 : 01 ] So we see that it is Christ's actual work that justifies us and the justification itself Is an act of God This is God's act. It's God's declaration And verse 26 He did this to demonstrate as justice at the present time so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus That's that whole idea of Him being The judge in the courtroom And the declaration Having been made And He makes that declaration And that declaration is An act of God. It's not a process of God. So you don't come along And Kind of Hope that you believe And hope that you will become justified over time There's no conditional period. There's no remand period. There's no bail period. There's no probation period

The moment you come to faith in Jesus Christ You are immediately Innocent before God sins past present and future dealt with Justified made right Does that mean we don't ask for forgiveness does that mean we don't sin neither of these things But if my child comes to me Having done something wrong Or if my child does something wrong I want my child To come and say sorry Even though I know I'll absolutely completely and fully and unconditionally forgive them Still want them to come and say sorry just because they know That they are forgiven and will be forgiven Doesn't mean that I want them to never say sorry and so with Christ

His word makes clear that though He will Absolutely forgive us 70 times seven. Why because He's just and He's already the price has already been paid He'll not make the payment twice But He wants us to come and ask for forgiveness when we do wrong. He wants us to love Him. He wants us to To recognize our need and He wants us to accept That we Fall short of His glory, but that we will be forgiven And it's a tremendous Reality for us that we're all equal Under God as Christians. We are sinners saved by grace. That's the basis of our fellowship. There's no snobbery. There's no pride There's no looking down our noses at anyone else. We are all in the same boat As believers and the message we have for the world in which we live is the same is that God's grace is full and free And it is a grace that transforms and it's an amazing picture of His love

The commitment of his love his unmitigated mercy to us and we Rejoice that we are justified freely By his grace Amen, let's power heads and pray Father god help us to understand and know What it means to be made clean What it means to be safe and secure In the arms of jesus christ Help us to live humbly And graciously with that truth And help us to love You and love Your ways because you Justifies you transform us you change our hearts You take away bitterness and pride and anger and frustration and rebellion and you enable us to See ourselves differently and see The world around us differently and above all see god differently

We remind ourselves of the Terror of thinking of a god Who judges us but that terror surely is mitigated and Finds a completely different perspective When we see that same god nailed to the cross Choosing To shed his own blood The lamb that was slain The good shepherd To mix the metaphors that lays down His life for the sheep We thank you for that And for your solution and your answer And we thank you that it is a gift free and full May we accept that gift And live in the light of that gift and not misunderstand the truth That your word presents for jesus sake amen