

Salvation—Justification (5th)

(We continue studying the subject of justification in this podcast by concluding with the ground of justification which is the righteousness of God.)

We ended the previous podcast saying that we would study other passages showing that the ground of justification is the righteousness of God. Furthermore, we previously established that the righteousness of God under consideration is neither that inherent righteousness that resides in God nor the comparative righteousness of man that distinguishes him to be of a just and righteous character, but that it is that righteousness secured in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That our justification is apart from anything we do is plainly declared in Romans 3:24. It says, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The Greek word translated “freely” is δωρεάν (dōreán) and means “without a cause, freely, for naught, in vain.” This is the word used in John 15:25 where it testifies that the enemies of Jesus hated Him “without a cause.” Just as our Lord had not done anything to cause any to hate Him, we have not done anything for God to justify us; there is no cause in us for God to justify us. We are justified on the “cause” or ground of the righteousness of God as wrought out by Christ.

Another passage that testifies of this glorious truth is Isaiah 54:17. It reads, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.” While the context is speaking of Israel, the application incorporates both Jew and Gentile. We must ever keep in mind that every spiritual blessing promised to Israel in the Old Testament is inclusive of every Gentile that is a child of grace. This is that mystery spoken about by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians whereby both Jew and Gentile are “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God,” Ephesians 2:19. In fact, in Ephesians 3:4, 9 it is designated as this mystery. All of the children of God are designated as His servants and their righteousness is of the Lord. Again, I direct your attention to the comments of Isaiah 54:17 by John Gill.

... **and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord**; the vindication of their righteousness, of their cause, and of their character; or the reward of their righteous works in a way of grace; even all that righteousness and true holiness that is in them, and that righteousness which is imputed to them, and by which they are justified, are from the Lord; by which they are secured from all the charges of law and justice, and, from all the accusations of men and devils, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and acquit them at the bar of God before men and angels; see **Ro** 8:33. (Romans 8:33 says, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”)

Equally, of this verse the *Preacher’s Homiletic Commentary* testifies:

1. The Christian’s justification is of God (Philippians 3:9). 2. His sanctification is of God (Philippians 2:13). 3. Boasting is excluded. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” 4. His security is perfect. If God justify, who can condemn? (Romans 8:34.) And if God sanctify, He will perfect that which concerneth us. This clause thus explains as well as ratifies the promise, and, further, it tells us how we may secure this promise for ourselves. Righteousness we have not by nature; we cannot attain it of ourselves; but we may receive it from God.

Now I would like to direct your attention to Romans 5:18-19: “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. 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 also declares that justification is by the righteousness of another. Many read these verses and think that Christ died for as many as were condemned in Adam. They believe that the *all men* in verse eighteen and the *many* in verse nineteen are the exact same in number. But this is not the case. In order to understand these verses it is necessary to understand the context. From Romans chapter three the theme is justification, and it continues through chapter eight. In chapter five, Paul deals with it by showing the analogy of justification to the fall of man. After discussing Christ's death for the ungodly and being justified by His blood, Paul introduces in verse twelve the fall of man. In verses thirteen through seventeen there is a parenthesis which enlarges on verse twelve. It is on the base of verses twelve through seventeen that eighteen and nineteen rest.

Romans 5:12 states, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Here it is declared that the human race fell in the sin of one man, Adam. The parenthesis (Romans 5:13-17) enlarges on this by pointing out that Adam prefigured Christ. All who were represented in Adam received the condemnation which fell on him in the transgression. And though Adam was a federal representative as was Christ, yet the analogy was not parallel in every respect. Concerning verses fifteen and sixteen, John Owen stated:

"The apostle proceeds to explain his comparison in those things wherein there is a dissimilitude between the comparates...."

He further explained that the opposition is between the *offence* on the one hand and the *free gift* on the other where he stated:

... between which a dissimilitude is asserted, not as unto their opposite effects of death and life, but only as unto the degrees of their efficacy, with respect unto those effects.

When one views these verses as a unit, it is obvious that the *sin*, the *transgression*, the *fall*, the *offence* was by *the disobedience of one*, (verse nineteen). The first sin of Adam is the fall whereby many fell and many offenses issued forth overwhelmingly. In opposition, there is the *free gift*, the *justification*, the *righteousness* which was by one, Jesus Christ. Concerning verse fifteen, "The grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ," the contrast is seen by the gift or "the free gift" (*χάρισμα*). Owen stated:

Wherefore, although this word, in the next verse, doth precisely signify the righteousness of Christ, yet here it comprehends all the causes of our justification, in opposition unto the fall of Adam, and the entrance of sin thereby. (From my book *Justification: The Heart of the Gospel*, pp. 65-67. Time does not allow us to quote at length Owen's explanation of the *comparates* in this podcast. However, I did quote him at length in my book on pages 67-72. For a fuller explanation I refer you to volume 5, pages 327-333, of his works as published by Banner of Truth Trust, or download this work in pdf format online.)

I will close by quoting from pages 69-72 from my book on justification.

With the parenthesis (verses thirteen through seventeen) briefly explained, we now can understand verses eighteen and nineteen. These verses take up the thought and analogy which was presented in verse twelve. That is, just as all who were represented in Adam sinned and fell under the condemnation, even so all who were represented in Christ were made righteous and were justified thereby. The *all men* and the *many* plainly refer to as many as were represented by their head.

It is plain that the *all men* in Adam are not the same in number as the *all men* in Christ. This is due to the fact that the same number in both cases does not receive the same results. In other words, all that sinned in Adam and were condemned do not have the righteousness of Christ unto justification of life. If this were not true, none would be cast into the lake of fire. The Scriptures plainly declare that the non-elect, goats, unbeliever, disobedient, and wicked will be cast into the pit (See Matthew 25:41-46; John 3:36; 10:26; I Peter 2:7-8; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; I John 2:4,22; Revelation 20:11-15).

The truth that the ground or cause of justification is the righteousness of Jesus Christ is clearly set forth in Romans 5:18-19. From first to last, justification is found only in Christ. No wonder the Scriptures declare, "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*" (Titus 3:5-7).

Dear reader, study the above carefully and seek to understand this truth in its fullness. If you do understand the thought found in Romans 5:12-19, then your assurance of salvation will not wax and wane with your emotional ups and downs. You can see that salvation, with its peace and joy, rest in the work of Him who became the Surety before the world was. You will believe that all your salvation is in Christ and that in Him you are righteous. Therefore, God says that you are justified in His sight. Oh, the joy to know that salvation is not found in the wicked heart of man! Truly peace floods the soul of him who rests in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you do not find peace in your soul, dear reader, I beseech you to flee to Christ. To seek the rest and comfort of salvation in any other place but Christ is to despise the truth of God. May both writer and reader daily strive to know the consolation of being found in Christ and His righteousness (Philippians 3:9).

Our time is up for today. Farewell.