

Salvation—Justification: Faith (8th)

(In this podcast we begin studying the role of faith regarding the doctrine of justification.)

Now we will study the place of faith in relation to justification. We have alluded to it in previous studies, but the Lord willing, we will begin to discuss it more fully at this time. In doing so, I believe it will be good to repeat some of the things previously mentioned in order, hopefully, to present a more balanced understanding of the subject overall. Repetition is essential to learning and studying any subject. The Lord affirmed this in His instruction to Isaiah regarding Israel of old: “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts. For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little,” Isaiah 28:9-10. John Milton Gregory wisely referred to this in his book *The Seven Laws of Teaching* when he said, “The law of review rests upon the universal and unchangeable laws of mind. The review may not always be made formally and with clear design, but no successful teaching was ever done in which the review in some form, either by direction of the teacher or by the private impulse of the learner, did not take place—the revisiting and repetition of the lesson learned. The ‘line upon line and precept upon precept’ (Isaiah 28:10, 13) rule of the Bible is a recognition of this truth.” (One should beware reading this book due to humanism being sprinkled throughout, though there are some good things to be gathered, especially the last chapter “The Law of Review and Application.”) Additionally, when inquiring how often should something be said in teaching, we find from the internet the following:

The idea of communicating a message over and over again isn’t new and its roots are in advertising and marketing. “Effective frequency” is a term used to define the number of times a person needs to hear an advertising message before responding to it. Different experts have different ideas for what that magic number is. The most agreed-upon is probably the “Rule of 7,” which suggests consumers need to hear a message seven times before they will consider taking action.

Applying the “Rule of 7” to the messages you want to have sink in with your students is something to carefully consider, especially if you want them to take certain actions.
(<https://knslearningsolutions.com/news/how-many-times-do-i-have-to-tell-you/>)

It goes without saying that faith has a vital role in justification, but I believe it is one of, if not the most misunderstood function regarding justification. It is commonly presented by Bible teachers, theologians, and ministers alike that when one exercises faith God at that time charges or applies the righteousness of God to an individual and justifies him before the Triune bar of justice. This is not limited to those who promote Arminian theology, but those of the reformed faith as well. Recently, a modern Baptist minister of the “reformed faith” wrote the following: “And while God’s Word reveals great spiritual mysteries, holy laws, fulfilled and yet-to-be fulfilled prophecies, beautiful poetry, instructive letters, doctrinal teaching, apocalyptic visions, and more, its greatest revelation is the salvation of sinners by faith alone in the crucified and resurrected God-man Jesus Christ. That revelation calls us to believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. But, dear reader, to reject the Bible’s authoritative call is to damn one’s soul for eternity. Believe, O believe the revelation of Christ Jesus for your soul’s sake!” Notice that he said that “the salvation of sinners” is “by faith alone in the crucified and resurrected God-man Jesus Christ.” He further stated, “That revelation calls us to believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.” In other words, “salvation,” “forgiveness of sins,” and “the gift of eternal life” is by “faith” and belief. This minister believes the truth of electing love of God before

the foundation of the world and that Christ died for only the elect for their salvation, and yet, in my opinion, his love for the souls of men and the presentation of the gospel is of such that it opens questions and misunderstandings regarding the nature and purpose of faith with reference to justification.

Many other suchlike quotes could be presented of this nature. You may remember that in the previous podcast we presented a quote from John Calvin where he said regarding Genesis 15:6, that Abram (Abraham) “obtained righteousness in the sight of God, and that by imputation” by faith. However, to show the complication and (I believe) confusion that is presented regarding this, I will try your patience with following quote from Jonathan Edwards:

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity. In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense, other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too. There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity in such expressions as are commonly used, ... such as condition of salvation, what is required in order to salvation or justification, the terms of the covenant, and the like; and I believe they are understood in very different senses by different persons. And besides, as the word condition is very often understood in the common use of language, faith is not the only thing in us that is the condition of justification; for by the word condition, as it is very often (and perhaps most commonly) used, we mean any thing that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied. If it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing. But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, with which justification shall be, and without which it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in Scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places; such are love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued or performed by us, in order to eternal life, which if they are done, or obtained, we shall have eternal life, and if not done, or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if faith was the only condition of justification in this sense, I do not apprehend that to say faith was the condition of justification, would express the sense of that phrase of Scripture, of being justified by faith. There is a difference between being justified by a thing, and that thing universally, necessarily, and inseparably attending justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connexion with justification that the Holy Ghost would signify (or that is naturally signified) by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith has in the affair, or some certain dependence that effect has on its influenced. (“Justification By Faith Alone,” *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, rev. by Edward Hickman (n.p., 1834; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), vol. 1, p. 623.)

Edwards said many things regarding faith and justification. Nevertheless, I believe a summary may be seen when he wrote “yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity. In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense, other qualifications and acts are

conditions of salvation and justification too.” Which is it? Faith, Christ alone, or something other? Romans 11:6 says, “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” It is one or the other: grace or works. You might remember that in a previous podcast we quoted Romans 3:28; 5:9; Galatians 2:17; and Titus 3:7 where justification is by ***faith, blood, Christ, and grace***, and that these terms testify to the same thing—the Person and work of Christ. May our hearts be filled with the sentiments of *Salvation is of Grace* as found in *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* by William Gadsby, No. 206, p. 171.

C.M. Gospel Mag., 1777

Salvation is of Grace. Eph. 2. 8; 1 John 4. 10

- 1 How sovereign is the love of God
To Israel’s favoured race!
Paid is the mighty debt they owed;
Salvation is of grace.
- 2 His love, without beginning, knew
Each chosen sinner’s case;
And sent his equal Son to show
Salvation is of grace.
- 3 Immanuel had not bled and died,
Nor suffered in our place,
But for this truth (O sound it wide!),
Salvation is of grace.
- 4 We had not known and loved the Son,
Nor sung his worthy praise,
But that himself the work begun;
Salvation is of grace.

The Lord willing, we will continue examining the connection of faith and justification in our next podcast, but our time is up for today. Farewell.