

Subject: *God's Work in Salvation: JUSTIFICATION*

Scripture: *Romans 8:28-30*

Unbelievers sometimes ask the question: "How could a loving God send people to a horrible place like hell?" But they don't ask this question: "How could a holy God allow people into heaven?" In this sermon we will see the answer to that question.

Two of these five things God does in salvation are in our lifetime: He calls us and justifies us. When God calls us to Himself, He justifies us. Some people reject God's calling and run from it because they think He's going to hurt them. He calls us not to condemn us, but to justify us.

1. The NEED for justification

Justification is a courtroom word, a legal term. It pictures God as the supreme judge. God is a righteous judge who will judge and punish sin.

Genesis 18:25 *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

The opposite of justification is condemnation. There is no middle ground. Every person will either be justified or condemned.

Romans 3:10-12¹⁰ *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*¹² *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Every person desperately needs to be justified by God. The problem is that we try to justify ourselves. We either excuse our sin or we think it is not too bad. We may try to improve or believe we are better than we used to be. The governor of Virginia is involved in an uproar over a picture that appeared in his medical school yearbook. One person made the comment that none of us would want people to judge us on our worst day. And I thought, none of us would want God to judge us on our *best day*.

Isaiah 64:6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Romans 3:20 *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 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

2. The MEANING of justification

- Justification is defined as an act of God whereby He imputes (credits) to a believing sinner the full and perfect righteousness of Christ, forgiving the sinner of all unrighteousness, declaring him or her perfectly righteous in God's sight, thus delivering the believer from all condemnation.
- There are no stages or steps to justification.
- There are no degrees or levels of justification.

When God justifies a person there is an instant change in his standing before God, not a gradual transformation. It is final and irreversible.

Heaven Came Down

*Born of the Spirit with life from above into God's family divine
Justified fully through Calvary's love, Oh, what a standing is mine.
And the transaction so quickly was made, when as a sinner I came;
Took of the offer of grace He did proffer; He saved me, Oh praise His dear name.*

3. The BASIS of justification

We have seen “what” God does in justification. Now let's take a look at “how” God does it.

- Christ died on the cross in the sinner's place

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

Romans 5:8-9⁸ *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*⁹ *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Romans 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

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

- Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers

Our sin is imputed to Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to us.

1 Corinthians 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

God justifies us on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed (credited) to us.

4. The METHOD of justification

- God justifies sinners by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone

Romans 3:24-26 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 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Acts 13:38-39 ³⁸ Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: ³⁹ And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

5. The EXAMPLES of justification

- Abraham

Romans 4:3 Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

- David

Romans 4:6-8 ⁶ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷ Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

- Parable of the Pharisee and tax collector

Luke 18:9-14 ⁹ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

6. The CERTAINTY of justification

Justification is one of God's five links in the golden chain of salvation. Just as surely as God foreknew us, predestined us, and called us, He justifies us, and will eventually glorify us.

Romans 8:33-34 ³³ 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, who also maketh intercession for us.

God's people are justified *freely*. God's people are justified *fully*. God's people are justified *forever*.

7. The RESPONSE to God's work of justification

If you are a believer and have been justified, this should be your response:

- Be grateful and praise God for it
- Be content and rest in your standing before God
- Be willing to tell others what God did for you and will do for them

If you are not a believer and you need God to justify you, this should be your response:

- Repent of your sin and trust Christ just like the tax collector did (“God, be merciful to me a sinner...this man went down to his house justified”).