

Grace Fellowship Church
*Delighting in God's Sovereign Saving Grace,
To the Glory of God!*

The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone

*“Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he
(1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and
(2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.” – Grudem*

*“There is no better test that we who are Christians can apply to ourselves to know the
quality of life that we really have in Christ, than this one: What is our reaction to the
mere mention of the word ‘justification’?” –Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

The Holiness of God

The Scriptures describe our God as a holy God. When we speak of God’s holiness we mean that God is absolutely sinless and separated from that which is sinful, and he is perfectly devoted to seeking his own honour and glory.

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Is. 6:3).

Further Meditation: Lev. 11:44; Ps. 99:9; 1 John 1:5; Rev. 4:8.

The Sinfulness of Man

The Scriptures teach that all men have sinned against their holy God since they have refused to honour, obey and praise God as they should.

*“For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him,
but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” (Rom.
1:21).*

“Have you considered how great is the weight of sin?” – Anselm

Further Meditation: Gen. 6:5; Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 3:9-18; Rom 3:23; Jam. 2:10, 11.

How Can Man Be Justified?

Ever since the fall man has asked the question, “How can sinful and unjust man be justified by a holy and just God?”

*“How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be
pure? Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes; how
much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!” (Job 25:4-6)*

Further Meditation: Prov. 17:15.

Position not Process

Justification is a declaration by God that a man is righteous. It does not mean to make righteous, good, holy or upright. It is a position not a process. We know this from the way we use the term.

“If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked” (Deut. 25:1 KJV).

“Nobody has understood Christianity who does not understand this word. It is the word ‘justified.’” – John Stott

Further Meditation: Prov. 17:15; Luke 7:29; Rom. 8:33, 34.

The Great Exchange: Forgiveness and Imputation

God remains just and holy in declaring us righteous because we *actually* receive his forgiveness and Christ’s righteousness, and Christ suffers in our place receiving our punishment. This is the “Great Exchange”.

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).

“O sweet exchange, O the incomprehensible work of God, O the unexpected blessings, that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in one righteous person, while the righteousness of one should justify many sinners.” – The Epistle to Diognetus

Further Meditation: Jer. 23: 5, 6; Rom. 5:19.

By Faith Alone

Justification is an act of God and God alone. But the Scriptures make it clear that God has chosen faith, and faith alone, as the means by which we receive the gift of Justification. A person is not justified on the grounds of faith but by faith.

“For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17).

“Paul emphasizes that the way one becomes right with God is by faith, trusting in God’s provision and resting on his promises. Right-standing with God is “from faith to faith” (Rom 1:17)-from first to last, from the beginning to the end of one’s life, it is realized by faith” – Thomas Schreiner

Further Meditation: Rom. 3:23-31; Rom. 4; Rom. 5:1; Rom. 9:30-10:4; Phil. 3:1-11.