

JUSTIFICATION BY THE IMPUTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

1) Summary of last week's message.

Original Sin and Depravity

Imputation (which means to reckon to our account) of Adam's sin, depravity and guilt to us.

There are 3 Imputations in Scripture.

Imputation of Adam's sin to man. The Imputation of our sin to Christ of the cross. The Imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer.

2) Today we will focus mainly on the Imputation of Christ's righteousness to us believers.

What is the Imputed righteousness of Christ?

This means that Christ represented us not only in His death **but in His life**. What we need is not only our sins to be paid for, but the perfect obedience to God's Law that He requires. It only took one sin to plunge creation into misery and ruin. So what we need is not only our penalty for breaking God's Law to be paid, but total perfect righteousness to be right with God.

With Christ paying for our penalty for breaking God's Law it puts us in a state of neutrality.

Similar to Adam before the fall. So you can refer to the Atonement as the negative aspect of Christ's work (meaning the taking away our sin), and Christ's righteousness (perfect obedience to God's Law) the positive aspect of His work. These two Imputations mentioned here both involve reckoning to someone's account who doesn't deserve it. Christ doesn't deserve to be treated like a sinner on the cross and we don't deserve to be treated as though we are righteous.

"9 Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** 10 **For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.** 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God **through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.** 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin

entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned- 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the **free gift** is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, **much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many**. 16 The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, **but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification**. 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, **much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ**.

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, **even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men**. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, **even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. 20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; **but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more**, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, **even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**." Romans 5

In verse 18 it says: "**through one act of righteousness** (Or it can also be rendered: '*the act of righteousness of one*'- your footnotes might say) **there resulted justification of life to all men**" and in verse 19 it says: "**even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**."

3) What is Justification? "We may define it as follows: 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" -Wayne Grudem

In Justification we are Legally (or forensically) declared righteous even though we are condemned and guilty because of Adam sin being imputed (or reckoned to our account) to us. Justification consists of Christ obeying the Law on behalf of His people and suffering under the Penalty of breaking God Law. Christ represents believers in His life and in His death.

To Justify does not mean to make someone to be good internally. It means to declare to be righteous or not guilty, just as condemn means declare to be guilty. It is important to emphasize that this **legal declaration in itself does not change our internal nature or character at all**.

Also, you can define it as such: "To declare legally that the demands of the Law as a condition of life are fully satisfied with regard to a person."

John Murray in his work *Redemption accomplished and applied* makes an important distinction between Regeneration and Justification:

Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what the judge does—he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status. If we are innocent he declares accordingly. The purity of the gospel is bound up with the recognition of this distinction. If justification is confused with regeneration or sanctification, then the door is opened for the perversion of the gospel at its center. Justification is still the article of the standing or the falling of the Church.

What we need is perfect obedience to the Law.

4) Why do we need perfect obedience to the Law? And who can fulfill perfect obedience to this perfect and holy Law?

"And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; **do this and you will live.**" But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"" Luke 10:25-29

Jesus was quoting what the Law says: "Do this and live" (Leviticus 18:5; Romans 2:13; 10:5)

"its not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified" Romans 2:13

In Galatians 3:10 it says: "**10** For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." --Paul here was quoting Deuteronomy 27:26

Also in James 2:10 he says: "**10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all."

None of us have loved God with our whole heart soul mind and strength perfectly and have neither loved your neighbor as yourself. "40 On these two commandments depend (or 'hang' KJV) the whole Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:40

2 Weeks ago we were discussing what some Theologians call the Covenant of Works

It says in Genesis 2 "15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

When Adam (as our representative) broke this covenant command by God "not to eat...etc.", he represented us in his disobedience to God's command. But Christ as all of the elects Representative, when He perfectly obeyed the commands, not just all of the negative commands, the "you shall not's", but all of the you shall's", represents us in His perfect righteousness and flawless obedience to all of God's righteous commands. **Adam was the Covenant breaker and Christ was the covenant keeper.**

Jesus the God-man (as we have been learning while going through the first few Verses of John's Gospel) is the only One who was born under the Law and yet without stain of original sin being born of God Holy Spirit. Jesus received His human nature from Mary, but He received His divine nature through God the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jesus is both God and man. He was sinless, with no original sin, and was both fully God and fully man. What we need is the righteousness of God, the God-righteousness that is in Christ alone. 'That alien righteousness' that Martin Luther called it.

"4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." Galatians 4:4-5

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's commentary says of this passage: **made under the law**--"made to be under the law." Not merely as GROTIUS and ALFORD explain, "Born subject to the law as a Jew." **But "made" by His Father's appointment, and His own free will, "subject to the law," to keep it all, ceremonial and moral, perfectly for us, as the Representative Man, and to suffer and exhaust the full penalty of our whole race's violation of it.** This constitutes the significance of His circumcision, His being presented in the temple ([Luk 2:21, 22, 27](#); compare [Mat 5:17](#)), and His baptism by John, when He said ([Mat 3:15](#)), "Thus it becometh us to *fulfil all righteousness.*"

"21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might **become the righteousness of God in Him.**" 2 Cor. 5:21

In this glorious Scripture we see Christ representing believers in paying the penalty of breaking God's Law on our behalf, and we see the righteousness of God that is in Him by Him keeping all of the Law perfectly for us so we can be washed in His blood and **clothed in His righteousness!!**

To be "in Christ", is to be united to Him, and represented by Him in His perfect righteousness and His substitutionary death.

5) Contrasting Adam and Christ

Adam disobeyed the Law, Christ obeyed the Law.

Adam was the covenant breaker, Christ was the covenant keeper.

In Adam there is condemnation to eternal death, in Christ there is the gift of righteousness to eternal life.

In Adam there was death, in Christ there is life.

In Adam there is wrath, but in Christ there is reconciliation.

In Adam there is judgment, in Christ there is justification.

Adam represented us in his disobedience, Christ represented us in His obedience.

By faith we can receive this free gift of Imputed righteousness. Just as Adam's sin was imputed to us, and our sin was imputed to Christ on the cross, so to His perfect life of obedience (His righteousness) can be reckoned to us by faith.

6) Justification is received by Faith alone

"9 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has

been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;" Romans 3

"Faith is the organ by which we appropriate the righteousness of Christ as the ground of our justification, rather than the organ by which we appropriate justification itself. Faith is the instrument by which we appropriate Christ and his righteousness... Faith justifies insofar as it takes possession of Christ" Louis Berkof

Appropriate: take possession of something that isn't ours

"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? **2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. **3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."** **4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,** " Romans 4

30 But by His doing you are in **Christ Jesus, who became to us** wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1

7) Our own righteousness will never justify us

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, " Phil. 3

"1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Romans 10

"6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."
Isaiah 64:6

What we need is perfect, magnificent, spotless, holy, divine garments!! The garments of Christ Jesus Himself!

Some Scriptural pictures and types of being clothed in the righteousness of Christ:

"The Lord God made **garments** of skin for Adam and his wife, and **clothed** them." Genesis 3:21 In this you see a type of the Atonement and Imputation of the righteousness of Christ!

"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with **garments of salvation**, He has wrapped me with a **robe of righteousness**, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10

"**3** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and [a]Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. **2** The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" **3** Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. **4** He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." **5** Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by." Zechariah 3

"In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'"

Jeremiah 23:6