

II.XI JUSTIFICATION IS THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE: Romans 3:21-26 - Shepherd School

I. OPENING PRAYER: All.

II. SERMON:

JUSTIFICATION IS THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE: Romans 3:21-26

INTRODUCTION. Tonight we come to the doctrine of Justification.

"This is the article upon which the church stands or falls," said **Luther**. And he is right.

If we get justification wrong, we are as hopeless as the Judaizers of which Paul said, "Let them be anathema." If we do not get Justification right, then we have lost the gospel, we have no hope of forgiveness of sins, we have no hope for a righteousness by which we can stand before our thrice holy God, and we have lost the whole plot of the Bible and even of the universe.

WE MUST GET JUSTIFICATION RIGHT, MEN, OR WE FALL.

CON(TEXT). Now as we come to Romans 3:21-26, let's remember the context.

Romans 1:1-3:20 answers the question *Why do we need the gospel?* In 1:18 Paul says, "It is the power of God for salvation." Now in Romans 3:21, Paul starts answering a different question—*How does God give this salvation through the gospel?* **READ ROMANS 3:21-26.**

DOCTRINE. God justifies sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, as revealed in the Scriptures alone.

I. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE WAS PREACHED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, BUT THE FULL MANIFESTATION OF IT IS REVEALED IN CHRIST (Rom. 3:21-22a).

Romans 3:21-22a "21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—22a the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."

- **This is why Paul tells Timothy what he does in 2 Timothy 3:14-15:**
 "14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
 - ***What is implied in these verses in the doctrine of Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone). It is through the revelation of the Scriptures alone that sinful man has made manifest to him the grace of God planned, purchased, offered, and applied to him through faith in Jesus Christ.***

The Church is not the final arbiter, the Pope is not the final arbiter, the creeds and counsels are not the final arbiter, natural or general revelation is not the final arbiter, and the traditions of men are surely not the final arbiter.

The Scriptures alone are the final arbiter on everything that we should believe and do, and, more specifically, it is the Scriptures alone which are the final arbiter on what the gospel is and how man is saved.

Q. Do you realize how good you have it in the New Covenant?

Adam and his posterity had Genesis 3:15.

Abraham and his had that plus "in your offspring all nations shall be blessed."

Moses and those who came after him had that plus the shadows of Christ in the Mosaic Law.

The Prophets and those who came after them had that plus promises of what was to come.

They had promises, prophecies, and shadows of a body hitting the ground from the man standing around the corner. They could tell His shape and size but could not make out His face or give Him a firm embrace.

But you and I now in the New Covenant!

The Man has come around. He is no longer vaguely known through promises, prophecies, and shadows. We can see the lines in His face. We can see the color of His eyes. We can smell the scent of His clothes. We can hear the sound of His voice. We fall down at His feet, hold on to them, and worship Him.

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE WAS PREACHED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, BUT THE FULL MANIFESTATION OF IT IS REVEALED IN CHRIST (Rom. 3:21-22a).-

II. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION BECAUSE ALL HAVE SINNED AGAINST GOD (Rom. 3:22b-23a).

Romans 3:22b "22b For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

- **(i) You sinned in Adam and need to be saved from sin in general.**
 - o **A [20].** The covenant [of works] being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. (1 Cor. 15:21,22; Rom. 5:12,18,19)
- **(ii) You have sinned in your own flesh and you need to be saved from sin in specific.**
 - o **A [18].** Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God. (1 John 3:4; Rom. 5:13)*

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION BECAUSE ALL HAVE SINNED AGAINST GOD (Rom. 3:22b-23a).

III. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS A GIFT THAT GOD HIMSELF GIVES (Rom. 3:24a).

Romans 3:24a "and are justified by his grace as a gift,"

- **This is why Paul says what he does to the Church at Ephesus in Ephesians 2:8-9:** "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

***This is the doctrine of Sola Gratia (Grace Alone).** God does not save by grace plus works nor grace plus cooperation nor grace plus the church nor grace plus anything else. It is by grace alone that God saves sinners through justifying by His grace as a gift.*

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS A GIFT THAT GOD HIMSELF GIVES (Rom. 3:24a).

IV. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE HAPPENS ONLY THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST ALONE (Rom. 3:24b).

Romans 3:24b "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"

- - **Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), a leading Puritan and member of the Westminster Assembly, in his discourse on *Christ the Object of Faith*:**
"Christ is the object of faith, in opposition to our own humiliation, or graces, or duties."

— *The Works of Thomas Goodwin, Vol. 4*

- **William Perkins (1558–1602), the Father of English Puritanism, in his exposition of the Apostle's Creed:**

"Faith is a supernatural gift by which we take hold of Christ with all the promises of salvation. The object of faith is Christ alone. Faith first sees Christ as the sacrifice on the cross for the remission of sins, then learns to experience Him as the strength to battle temptation, the comfort to endure affliction, and ultimately as everything needed in this life and in the life to come."

This is the doctrine of Solus Christus (Christ alone). Justifying faith has Christ alone as its object. It is not a general belief in God nor a belief in the promises of salvation, but a specific belief, trust, and rest on Christ alone for salvation, as He is offered to you in the gospel.

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE HAPPENS ONLY THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST ALONE (Rom. 3:24b).

V. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT PROPITIATION (Rom. 3:25a).

Romans 3:25a "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

Consider the phrase, "propitiation by His blood" (Romans 3:25a).

– **PROPITIATION BY HIS BLOOD:**

- **Hebrews 2:17** "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
- **1 John 4:10** "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

This is the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement.

Christ was penalized as our substitute as He made atonement for our sins on the cross, bearing all the wrath from the Father that His people deserved, and securing for us total forgiveness and a complete righteousness.

Now consider that little phrase, "To be received by faith" (Romans 3:25ab).

Learn clearly here that the saving benefits of Christ crucified are received by us through faith alone.

That is to say, justification—the forgiveness of our sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness—is given to us by grace alone,

through faith alone, in Christ alone.

– **TO BE RECEIVED BY FAITH:**

- **Romans 3:28** "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law."
- **Romans 4:1-8** "1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 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 counted to him as righteousness." 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:
7 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;
8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.'"
- **Galatians 2:16** "We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."
- **Galatians 3:11** "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" (quoting Habakuk 2:4)

OBJECTION. Does not James say that we are justified by works and not by faith alone?

ANSWER: James is dealing with our *profession* being justified in the sight of men, whereas Paul is dealing with our *persons* being justified in the sight of God.

James 2:14-18 "14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT PROPITIATION (and these benefits are received through faith alone) (Rom. 3:25a).

VI. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE WAS GIFTED TO OLD TESTAMENT BELIEVERS BASED ON WHAT CHRIST *WOULD DO* (Rom. 3:25b).

Romans 3:25b "This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins."

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VII. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE IS GIFTED TO NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS BASED ON WHAT CHRIST *HAS DONE* (Rom. 3:26).

Romans 3:26 "It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

– Soli Deo Gloria.

CALVIN. "When therefore we are justified, the *efficient* cause is the mercy of God, the *meritorious* [cause] is Christ, the *instrumental* [cause] is the word in connection with faith. Hence faith is said to justify, because it is the instrument by which we receive Christ, in whom righteousness is conveyed to us." — **John Calvin, Bible Commentary, Romans 3**

CLARIFICATION.

Rome does not deny that we are justified through the Scriptures, by grace, through faith, in Christ, to the glory of God. They deny the "alone's" and without the "alone's," everything falls apart.

They teach:

- **The Scriptures + tradition.**
- **Grace + works.**
- **Faith + their sacraments.**
- **Christ + their saints via the treasury of merit.**
- **The glory of God + the glory of man (consequently).**

It is clever, but Satan is very clever, and disguises himself as an angel of light.

DIRECTION.

- **If you love your own soul,** you must affirm against the teachings of the papists on justification.
- **If you love your neighbors,** you must affirm against the teachings of the papists on justification.

NOW LET'S CLOSE WITH SOME APPLICATION

Use these truths for Instruction

- I) God has only ever justified sinners one way—through faith alone in Christ alone for His glory alone.
- II) See how concerned Paul is with defending the Lords righteousness, and therefore you should be too.

Use these truths for Examination

- I) Do you know how far you fall short of the glory of God?
- II) Do you know you deserve God's righteous wrath?
- III) Do you know there is no distinction when it comes to the sinfulness of man apart from the grace of God?
- IV) Have you received Christ by faith? Is He your propitiation? Receive and rest in Him alone for salvation.

Use these truths for Warning

- I) If Christ is not your propitiation, you will get God's condemnation.
 - God crushed His own Son for the sins of His people. Do you think he will wink at you?

Use these truths for Comfort

- I) Justification is a gift, and one that can never be taken away from you.
- II) If Christ is your propitiation, then there is therefore now no condemnation for you.
- III) Christ came into the world to purchase you and make you His prized possession.

Use these truths for Exhortation or Direction

- I) Search the Scriptures and see how Christ your Redeemer permeates the pages.
 - II) You who once fell so far short of God's glory, make it your aim to glorify Him in all of life now that He has redeemed you.
 - III) Teach those in your charge about the holy mercy of God—He is so holy that He must punish sinners, yet He is so merciful that He has not abandoned us to torment and death. He is just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus!
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III. SONG:

B r e a k (start back at 7:10pm)