

We Believe

What We Believe about Salvation

Romans 3:20-26

November 26, 2017 am

HDBC

This is part 4 in the series, ***We Believe***. Examining what we believe about nine theological subjects. Contrary to what many believe in this permissive culture . . . what you believe about God and the things He has revealed, are important. In other words, **Theology Matters**. That is so critically important when it comes to Salvation.

What do we mean by salvation? From a theological perspective . . .

It is the spiritual act by God that . . .

causes our sins to be forever forgiven and gives us the righteousness of Christ,
causes us to be born again spiritually and adopted into God's family,
causes us to be saved from eternal hell and to eternal heaven
is a gift of God that only comes through grace and by faith.

The Bible uses a number of words to help us understand the concept of spiritual salvation. Each one offers a perspective on the topic. The Bible speaks of salvation from the perspective of . . .

Election – That we are saved only because God wanted us to be saved. We would not have the ability to be saved apart from His desire to save us. Our salvation is initiated by God, not by us.

Regeneration – Salvation brings life to that which is dead. We are physically born, spiritually dead. Salvation brings life to our dead spirits. Jesus referred to salvation as being **born again**. Bringing life to what was intended to have life and once had life in Adam and Eve, but was lost when they sinned.

Conversion – In salvation we are converted from one direction, destination and way of life and changed to another. It involves a radical change. Repentance is the word that refers to a person's decision to embrace this conversion.

Adoption – Through salvation we are adopted into God’s family. Without salvation we are outside of His family. When we are saved we become part of his family.

Justification – The declaration by God that we are justified in His eyes. It is His declaration that He no longer looks at us through our sinfulness but through the goodness and righteousness of His Son, Jesus. He takes the innocent record of Jesus’ life and applies it to our lives. Then declares us innocent. **Swapping grades.**

It is that last word that I want us to focus on this morning. **Justification.**

Read Text Rom. 3:20-26.

Justification is . . .

More than parole. Parole sets a person free, but with restrictions.

More than pardon. Frees from penalty, but not the guilt.

Justification frees from restrictions, penalty and guilt.

At salvation, God makes a judicial declaration about you that can never be revoked.

Seven things revealed in our text about Justification.

1. It Cannot be Earned (20-21)

There is no possible way to find yourself justified based upon anything that you might be able to do. In Paul’s day there were those who were still trying to get right with God by keeping the law. Doing good. That idea still lingers.

Article about Muhammad Ali. Parkinson’s disease, but still joking. *“I used to chase women. But Parkinson’s has changed all that. Now maybe I have a chance to go to Heaven.”* He travels doing charity benefits. *“With everything I do, I ask myself, ‘will God accept this?’ One day you’ll wake up and it will be judgment day, so you need to do good deeds.”*

NO! NO! NO! That is not the answer. Doing good is fine. But it will not help you on judgment day. You can’t do enough good to be declared righteous.

2. It Comes Through Faith (22a)

What you cannot earn with good works, you may receive by trusting Christ for your salvation. More than intellectual assent. It is a willingness to surrender all that you have and are and give them to Him. Coming to the place where you realize that you cannot do it on your own.

It has always been this way. Paul offers the great illustration of Abraham. He was saved not because of his works, but because he believed God. **This is what the Reformation was all about.** The great cry was Faith Alone. Not faith plus!

Note that it is Faith in Christ. It is not the faith that saves, but the Christ in whom we place our faith. In some circles today faith is not given enough emphasis. In other circles it is given too much prominence. The “Faith” itself is glorified. Faith is essential, but it has to be in the right person, Jesus Christ.

3. It is Offered to All (22b)

No one is excluded from a chance to be justified. Not provided only for one segment of humanity or another. Anyone can receive this wonderful gift.

Anyone who truly believes in Christ for salvation will be justified. No one who cries out to God in faith will be rejected. Jesus said,

the one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out.

It does not matter what you have done. No one is so bad that they cannot be saved, and no one is so good that they do not need to be saved. Which brings us to truth number four.

4. It is Needed by All (23)

There is none righteous, no not one. Romans 3:10

1 John 1:8-10. Points out that we are all sinners by nature and by practice. The one who claims to have no sin is a liar and is calling God a liar. Strong words. Leaves no room for anyone to claim perfection. I have known a few who acted as if they thought they were perfect.

Evangelist, Eddie Martin told of lady who came forward – But I'm not a sinner, Everyone is a sinner, Well, then, I am a good sinner, there are no good sinners, finally came under conviction and was saved.

5. It is a Gift From God (24)

It cannot be earned. God has chosen to provide it not because we deserve it, but because he wants to do it. Unmerited. No one will be in heaven who deserves to be there. Some of you have a hard time accepting gifts from others. Don't let that be the case with this wonderful gift of salvation.

6. It was Purchased by Jesus (24b-25)

Great question is, "How could a just God, invite unjust people into his family and into his heaven?" Great question.

Three key words explain how this could happen.

A. Redemption

Apolutrosis – Idea of delivering, especially by means of paying a price. Commonly used in that day of **paying the ransom to set a prisoner free**, or to pay the price for a slave in order to free him.

Because of our sin, we are in debt. A debt which we cannot pay. God provided a way for the debt to be paid by another so that our freedom could be purchased.

B. Propitiation

The provision for our freedom was not made in some back room in Heaven. It was publicly displayed outside the city of Jerusalem. Place called Calvary. There, God's son, was made a propitiation. Great Word!

Carries the idea of appeasement. Satisfaction. In ancient pagan religions, as in many religions today, the idea of man's appeasing a deity by various gifts or sacrifices was common. In the New Testament this word always refers to an act of God. Man is utterly incapable of satisfying God's justice.

The only acceptable propitiation would have to be provided by God. And it was. His Son took the mission. Sinless life and sacrificial death.

C. Blood

The propitiation was completed in his shed blood. The perfect, pure, spotless blood of Jesus completed the propitiation. The satisfaction. The appeasement. When Jesus shed His blood, it was enough to satisfy the wrath of God against the sins of all humanity.

7. It Glorifies God (26)

Note what the verse says. The justification of people was done **in order to point to the righteousness of God**. In other words our salvation brings glory to God by pointing out just how good He really is. Our salvation points to his goodness and in going so brings Him glory.

Paul takes it a step further when he points out that God is at the at the same time two things: **Just** and **the Justifier**. In other words, in making it possible for us to be forgiven and justified, He did not forfeit His own righteousness. If He had simply ignored out sins, letting us go unpunished, then His standard of righteousness would be worthless. If a law can be violated with no consequences that law is worthless.

God maintained His righteousness by making sure that our sins were indeed punished. In doing so, He remains Just, as Paul indicates. But He not only remained **Just**, He was also the **justifier**. In other words, He was the one who made our justification possible through the sacrificial death of His Son.

What an incredible plan. He would judge and punish sin, as righteousness demands. But He would judge and punish that sin not in those who committed the sins, but in His innocent Son, Jesus. In that way, his righteous standard is maintained, and sinful people have an opportunity to be saved.

Wow! This does indeed point to His righteous goodness and brings Him glory.