

Justification Seminar

Session One

- I. What is justification?
 - A. Why did you come to this seminar when you could have gone to ...?
 - B. What did you expect here?
 - C. Justification is a noun. What is its corresponding verb?
 - D. What does it mean to justify someone?
 - E. Who needs to be justified?
- II. It all begins in the beginning
 - A. Genesis 2:15-17 God gave Adam two commands
 - B. The penalty for disobedience is death
 - C. Genesis 3:6 Disobedience!
 - D. Genesis 3:7-10 Guilt!
 - E. Ever since, all offspring of Adam inherit a sinful nature
 - 1. All human beings sin
 - 2. All human beings *feel* guilty
 - 3. All human beings *are* guilty
 - 4. This is true, even for the millennial generation
 - 5. All human beings deserve to die
- III. Justification is a legal issue
 - A. Other aspects to salvation
 - 1. Adoption – Who is my family?
 - 2. Sanctification – How can I stop sinning and live in obedience to God?
 - 3. Glorification – What is my future?
 - 4. Regeneration – How can I get life when I'm under a death sentence?
 - 5. Etc.
 - B. The legal aspect
 - 1. Have you kept God's law?
 - 2. Are you innocent or guilty of breaking the law?
 - 3. Penalty for lawbreaking (sin) is death – Genesis 2:16-17
 - 4. Since everyone is guilty, everyone must die
 - 5. Is there therefore any hope for mankind?
 - 6. If God just forgave mankind his sin, isn't that a violation of justice?

7. Justification answers the legal question, how can a just God forgive guilty sinners?

IV. Justification begins with the gospel

- A. What is the gospel?
- B. What does the word mean?
- C. What is good about this news?
- D. Paul's letter to the Romans
 1. Romans 1:13-15 Why Paul wanted to preach to the Romans
 2. Romans 1:16-17 Why Paul preached the gospel
 3. Two points:
 - a. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God
 - (1) Righteousness: good – just, merciful, compassionate, ethical, loving
 - (2) The gospel reveals that God is righteous
 - (3) The gospel reveals how man may be righteous
 - b. This righteousness comes through faith

V. First the bad news

- A. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." Romans 1:18
 1. Everyone knows that God is their creator and judge – Romans 1:19
 2. God has shown it to them in creation – Romans 1:20
 3. Everyone suppresses this truth – Romans 1:18
 4. False religions are sophisticated truth-suppression mechanisms
 5. Ordinary people do this by throwing themselves into work, play, family, nation, etc.
 6. Everyone is guilty – Romans 1:20
- B. Guilty men keep sinning more and more
 1. Immoral gentiles – Romans 1:21-32
 2. Moral gentiles – Romans 2:1-16
 3. Jews – Romans 2:17-3:9
- C. Everyone is guilty – Romans 3:9-20
 1. Each one of us is totally depraved
 2. All of us together are totally depraved
 3. No one will be justified by his own works

VI. Luther's Dilemma

- A. If God is just to sinful men, He will show mercy to none
- B. If God is merciful to sinful men, He will not be just
- C. How can God be merciful without compromising His justice?
- D. It is not good news to be condemned by an unmerciful God
- E. It is not good news to be saved by an unjust God
- F. Neither is righteous – How then does God reveal His righteousness in the gospel?

VII. Now the good news: God's righteousness revealed – Romans 3:21-26

A. The logic of God's righteousness

- 1. If someone kept the law, he would be found innocent of sin; he would be justified
- 2. Since no one has kept the law, everyone is guilty, and is subject to death
- 3. But there is a way to be found innocent without having kept the law
- 4. Romans 3:21 – God is righteous in showing mercy to sinful men even though they have not kept the law

B. Romans 3:24-25 Christ our propitiation

- 1. We are justified as a gift
- 2. I.e. we are declared innocent even though we committed capital crimes; this verdict is given to us as a gift
- 3. Good! But isn't that unjust?
- 4. Romans 3:25 – Christ is our propitiation
- 5. Jesus died for us, in our place
- 6. Propitiation – satisfaction of divine justice
- 7. Our sin demanded the death penalty; Jesus paid that penalty for us

C. Romans 3:26 God is just and justifier of the guilty

- 1. God's justice is satisfied in that the penalty was paid
- 2. Our sin brought a guilty sentence and required death as the penalty
- 3. Jesus paid that penalty, so justice is served
- 4. Now that the penalty is paid, nothing more is required
- 5. Therefore man can go free – a justified person, legally innocent of sin

VIII. More than forgiveness

- A. At this point you are in legal limbo – not guilty, but not righteous either
- B. God does more than clear your guilt – He also credits you with righteousness
- C. Philippians 3:4-6 Paul was the perfect Jew; He kept the law better than anyone
- D. Philippians 3:7-8 When He met Jesus, Paul realized that his own goodness was worthless in comparison with the goodness of Jesus
- E. Paul came to see that through faith in Jesus, he – Paul – could get credit for the goodness of Jesus
- F. Two way trade
 - 1. When God justifies us, He credits Jesus with our sin, and killed Him for it
 - 2. When God justifies us, He also credits us with Jesus' righteousness and gives us life
- G. When God justifies us, we are more than innocent – we get credit for Jesus' good deeds
- H. When God justifies us, our legal status changes from guilty to righteous

IX. Justification obtained

- A. Jesus paid for sins by dying in our place, but how do we get this credit for His death?
- B. Romans 3:22 God's righteousness apart from the law is revealed in those who believe
- C. Romans 3:25-26 Faith in Jesus is the means by which we are declared righteous

X. Faith explained

- A. Faith is not a feeling state
- B. Faith and believe are the same word in Greek
- C. The essence of faith (believing) is trust
- D. Faith is believing that God is telling the truth and trusting Him to be right
 - 1. Your good works are worthless to save you
 - 2. Jesus' death paid for your sins
 - 3. God now sees you as righteous

- E. Faith does not justify us – God justifies us
 - 1. We are saved by grace, not by faith
 - 2. Romans 3:24 Grace is undeserved favor – a gift, not a payment or reward
 - 3. Faith is the *instrument* of God's grace
 - 4. All faith does is connect you to God, who then freely accepts Jesus' death for you and accepts Jesus' good deeds as your own

XI. Rich uncle illustration

- A. Rich uncle calls his nephews to give them \$1 million
- B. First nephew hates this uncle and hangs up on him
- C. Second nephew thinks he is joking and makes fun of him
- D. Third nephew believes him and thanks him for his generosity
- E. How will the uncle respond to each nephew?
- F. Which nephew had faith (believed) in his uncle?
- G. What good deed did the nephew do to earn the uncle's \$1 million?

XII. Result: No condemnation! Romans 8:1

Session Two

I. Review

- A. Justification answers the legal question, how can a just God forgive guilty sinners?
- B. Romans 3:23 All people have sinned
- C. All people are subject to God's anger and deserve to die
- D. The gospel is that Jesus died in our place
- E. Justification is a two-way transaction
 - 1. Jesus is credited with our sin, and died for it
 - 2. We are credited with Jesus' righteousness
- F. We are justified when we believe the gospel
 - 1. Faith does not save us – God saves us
 - 2. Faith is trusting that God is telling the truth about all this
 - 3. Faith is not trying to earn acceptance with God, but accepting that Jesus makes us acceptable

G. Westminster Shorter Catechism

1. Q. 33. What is justification?
2. A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

II. Fruit of justification: Peace with God

A. Romans 5:1

B. The ugly beauty of God's wrath against sin

1. Romans 1
2. Isaiah 63:1-6
3. God stomped on the wicked until their blood squirted out, then He made them drink it

C. That storm of anger is over for you.

1. God exhausted His anger against your sin on Jesus
2. Now there is only calm
3. You will never know this wrath of God

III. Fruit of justification: Life

A. Romans 5:18

B. The promise for sin was death

C. The promise of justification is life

1. Cleared of guilt, we no longer face the death penalty
2. We have new life now with God, and forever

IV. Fruit of justification: No condemnation

A. Romans 8:1, 31-39

B. It's too good to be true, but it's true

1. You have the legal record of Jesus
2. Your record includes healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the hurt, preaching to the lost, etc.
3. This is a permanent record
4. No sin you commit will ever change this record

C. God welcomes you as well as He welcomes His Son Jesus

1. Nothing can ever turn God against you
2. Sin grieves God, but it never separates God's children from Him

- D. This is the beating heart of the gospel, but people – even professing Christians – don't believe it
 - 1. Scandalous – grossly unfair
 - 2. Dangerous – will lead to moral anarchy
 - 3. This is why the Jews hated the apostle Paul so much

- V. Fruit of justification: Good works
 - A. Romans 8:12-13
 - B. Good deeds do nothing to clear our guilt or make God love us more
 - C. But good deeds are the natural and inevitable *result* of justification
 - D. Good deeds do not *secure* God's grace, but are an *indicator* of God's grace

- VI. Fruit of justification: **Peace with each other**
 - A. Romans 14:1-3, 10
 - B. If God accepts your brother, how can you reject him?
 - 1. God's acceptance is not based on his theology, his morals, his culture, etc.
 - 2. God's acceptance is based solely on the righteousness of Jesus, which your brother bears
 - 3. If God sees your brother as righteous in Jesus, you must view him the same way.
 - C. This does not mean you must think that your brother is right about everything, or that you must agree on all points, or that you must be in the same church
 - D. It does mean that you must not argue unhealthily, harbor resentment or anger against him, or look down on him as a lesser Christian

- VII. Does this describe you?
 - A. Are you free from guilt?
 - B. Are you comfortable with God?
 - C. Do you accept other Christians even if you don't agree with them?
 - D. Have you been justified?

VIII. Recommendations

- A. If you have never believed in Jesus – now is the time to start!
- B. If you do believe in Jesus, but still feel guilty – read Romans 8 every day for a month
- C. If you are critical of other Christians – read Romans 14 every day for a month

Resources:

Westminster Confession of Faith:

http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/

Westminster Shorter Catechism:

<http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html>

Westminster Larger Catechism:

http://www.reformed.org/documents/wlc_w_proofs/index.html

The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination; Loraine Boettner; P&R Publishing

Justified by Faith Alone; R.C. Sproul; Crossway

What is Justification by Faith Alone?; J. V. Fesko; P&R Publishing

C David Green

Summer Conference

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