

Justification

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Date: 13 October 2011

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[0 : 00] That's just an intro passage. What we're going to kind of focus on tonight is the last little part of that where it says that God was both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ.

And I want to invite you to go ahead and turn flip over to Genesis chapter two, first book in the Bible. So we're going to talk tonight about the doctrine of justification. And I honestly can say, and I know several guys in here probably agree with me, that when I'm having some of my darkest moments of like doubt and depression and my faith is really, really weak and I feel really far from the Lord.

And this doctrine is one of the first ones that come to my mind that actually gives me comfort and peace and security because it's not because of what this doctrine actually teaches and implies.

And so we're going to talk about tonight is really important. And I hope that I feel really inadequate to talk about it because it's a wonderful and glorious truth in the scripture.

And Martin Luther himself actually said that justification was the one doctrine, whether the church would stand or fall. He really said that's what the whole reformation was about in his words.

[1 : 20] So I kind of want to give you like a little intro here. You ever heard anybody say this is not in the Bible, by the way, but this is something that people really throw out there a lot. When you die one day and you go to heaven and God says, why should I let you in or why should you come and be in my presence?

A lot of people ask that question and a lot of people might answer differently to that question. So that's what we're going to kind of talk about tonight. And I have I have three different things.

Let me think about that. I think it's for four points tonight to kind of unpack this together. But the first one is, why do we need justification? Why do we need justification?

So we're going to look into that by looking at Genesis to. Verse twenty four to twenty five. And then we're going to jump forward to chapter three.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh in a man and his wife. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

[2 : 28] So this is the beginning of the creation of man and woman. And the purpose of which they were created was to glorify God and to reflect who he was. They were created in the image of God.

John talked about that a long time ago. I want that implied where it's being created in the image of God actually mean. And they were to to walk in a relationship with God and to to honor him and all that they did.

And so we're going to jump to Genesis three. Just go to one chapter. I'm going to go to verse six.

And the one condition that God made was that you not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And that was the only conditional thing. And as we know, both Eve and Adam ate from that tree and were disobedient. And because of that, death was brought. Spiritual death, physical death, everything was brought to mankind.

That's where sin entered the world. So we're going to like see the consequences of that. But we read in verse seven, just after they've eaten of the tree. Verse seven, it says, then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked.

[3 : 37] And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, the Lord God, among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord called to the man and said to him, where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked.

And I hid myself. And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I have commanded you not to eat? And we're going to stop right here.

But there's a lot of stuff in here. But I want you to notice something. Like what was the first immediate result of life? What's the consequence of them eating of the tree? Their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked.

They knew that they had this knowledge. And they were greatly ashamed, like full with guilt. Guilt and shame were like the things that followed right after that happened. And they made coverings for themselves.

[4 : 45] An awareness. Shame, guilt, like in the heart of a sinner that has been disobedient towards God. And this guilt and shame led them to flee and to run and to hide.

And that's why ever since, like we have that retreat mechanism in us whenever we get caught doing something. And a desire to hide their nakedness for which they are now ashamed, which they were not before.

And so why did they make, does it say clothes? It doesn't say clothes at all. It says coverings. So they didn't like where the fashion industry started.

I heard people kind of joke around, that's where the fashion industry started. That's not what the fashion industry started. They made coverings. Not for adornment. To kind of like look good.

They made it because they were ashamed. They wanted to hide. And that's where it came from. Like a covering of fig leaves. Something that doesn't really cover your body that well.

[5 : 44] And from that moment on, man has become like a cosmic fugitive. Like he's always hiding from the presence of God. And he wants to hide his sin from the presence of God.

And men are always searching out darkness to hide their sin that they commit. Who you are in private, who you are in public, could be two different things.

When people are caught, they want to flee. They want to hide. They don't want to come into the light of God's presence. One of God's identifying characteristics is he dwells in light. He dwells in unapproachable light, it says in Timothy.

John 3 says this. This is the judgment. The light is coming to the world and people love darkness rather than the light. Because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light. Lest his works should be exposed. So they've hidden themselves in the presence of God.

[6 : 42] And remember, like, before they heard, before the fall, before they disobeyed God, when they heard God walking in the garden, they were filled with, like, joy and delight and anticipation.

They were excited, like, wow, the Lord is here. The Lord God Almighty is walking with us. It was a beautiful picture. So they were filled with joy and anticipation of Him walking among them.

But after the fall, after their sin, they were filled with, like, not joy and anticipation. They were filled with, like, abject terror. They were frightened. And they ran.

They hid. And of what fear for what God may do to them. So they hide their sin. They flee among the trees of the garden.

And God calls out to them. And He's like, you know, why are you hiding? They say, well, we're naked. And He's like, who told you that you were? Because then He's like, He's trying to show them, like, you do with a child.

[7 : 43] Like, you know the answer to a question. We're trying to get them to see what they did. You try to lead them down, like, this path. Like, oh, how did you know that? The only way you could know that is if you ate at the tree. So they said yes.

And so we hid ourselves. And God, I mean, you ever wonder, like, why? Like, why? Why would they be so afraid of God? God's the one who made them, breathed life into them. He's the one who gave them each other to be with.

He's only done good to them ever. Like, only good. And they're afraid. And they run and hide themselves. So they betrayed all of God's purpose for which they were created, which was to walk with Him and honor Him in the garden, to reflect His character and live in, like, a joyful relationship. So we all are born in sin and separated from God, and we cannot be in the presence of God at all. So, and because of that, we face eternal damnation away from God, separation, away from His peace, His joy, His fellowship.

And so we've covered that really well. I think we emphasize sin a lot here. Because only until you understand, like, how sinful you really are, or how lost you really were before Christ, you can't

appreciate God's grace at all.

[9 : 04] You say I'm saved, you ask, what am I saved from? And you're saved from something that's almost indescribable, like the worst thing you ever can imagine. And so, so what is the response to this?

Leads to our next point, which is, how is justification possible before God? How can we be justified before God? And so we're going to kind of explore this together.

Have you ever heard the phrase, God helps those who help themselves? Have you ever heard of that before? Remember, that's not in the Bible. That's, Ben Franklin said that in Paul Richard's Almanac, and actually somebody said that before him in the 1600s.

So it's not in the Bible. God helps those who help themselves. And what that's implying is that God will justify or make right or proclaim innocent the ungodly when the ungodly have actually made themselves godly on their own.

And, which is not what we just read in Romans 3, it says that God justifies the ungodly, you know, because of what Christ has done on the cross.

[10 : 15] So we're going to get into this. A lot of us know that we're not saved by works, anything that we do. But a lot of us know that. But have you ever thought about why?

We can read that in the Bible and think, well, it says right there, not by works. But there's actually like a lot of meaning as to why that cannot be. All right? And I'm going to kind of unpack this for you a little bit.

Our good deeds cannot save us. We cannot make ourselves godly so that we will be right in the sight of God. We can't make amends for the damage that has been done. And the first reason is that all good deeds, everything that we do is to be done to the glory of God.

That's in 1 Corinthians. And secondly, because of the great commandment, we're going to do all things out of love for God. And so when you do things to make amends for what you've done with God, you're doing them almost out of self-preservation.

You don't want to go, you don't want to be separated from God. You don't want to go to hell. But you're not doing it because you love Him. You're not doing it for His glory. Anyway, so your good deeds are defective for that very reason.

[11 : 23] We're to love the Lord our God of heart, soul, mind, and strength. That's like not negotiable. So that's one reason why. And you say, I'm going to do good things so I can justify myself in the sight of God.

That also gives you grounds to boast. Look what I did. Even if God did 95% of the work and you did 5%, that gives you some grounds to boast. And God won't allow that.

He actually says in Isaiah 48, I will not, will not share my glory with anybody at all. And at the same time, it contradicts the fact in Isaiah 43 that God says that He is the only Savior.

Not He partners with man to achieve salvation. He's the only Savior. So God will not share His glory. And He's the only Savior. So your good deeds are defective.

Because they're not done out of a genuine desire to glorify God or not motivated by love for God. They're like all out of self-preservation. There your will terminates.

[12 : 29] You must love God and want to glorify Him in what you do. So if a judge in a human court makes you do like a lot of hours of community service, you kind of make amends for what you did.

Some of us may have had to do that before. I've come close. But not for anything bad. It's more like a ticket I got doing something. I don't know why I brought that up. But let's just say I did my community service hours.

This is a simple question. I'm just trying to prove a point. Does that change the fact that I committed a crime? It doesn't. I still committed a crime. So in the end, like your good deeds are the same way. Like you can't make amends for this. You actually committed a crime. Isaiah 64, 6 says this. We all have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind take us away. Our righteous deeds are as filthy rags. A lot of people know that verse as. We can't do anything to make ourselves right before God.

[13 : 35] Romans 3, 20. For by works of the law, no human will be justified in his sight. Since through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

So the law of God doesn't save anybody. It actually just shows you your sin. It shows you how helpless you are. It gives us the knowledge of what sin is. But it's not meant to save you.

No one has ever kept the law perfectly except one person. And that's what we'll be going in a second. And so you just have to walk down the Ten Commandments. You'll see that you've broken every one of them at some point.

And James says if you've broken one, you're guilty of breaking all of them. So it's a serious issue. We cannot be justified by our works or by keeping God's law.

We've all failed. So then, like, how can we be justified in God's sight? I mean, justified just means, like, to prove right, to prove just. You have kept the law.

[14 : 33] To be righteous in someone's sight. That's what being justified means. So, and so I think we're still in Genesis 3.

But I'm going to show you, like, what happened here. Genesis 3, verse 20. So, in this verse, we see the first action of the gospel.

A little bit before that, we see the first promise of the gospel. Where God tells Satan, you know, through the seed of the woman, there's going to come someone who's going to crush your head. That's a promise about Christ that is to come.

But in this verse, we actually see the first action of the gospel ever. Like, what did God do? And we see him doing something kind of outrageous. He could have said, you've had your chance.

Oh, well, you blew it. Get out of the garden and go wander the earth in fear and in terror, hiding from me. And he could have said that. And he would have been wrong to do that.

[15 : 35] But we see him do something else. Verse 20. The man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments and skins and clothed them. So, that's the first action of the gospel. He says, you need to be covered.

But this is what you've got going on. It's not going to work. So, he actually kills an animal. And he covers them with the skin. And there is a covering idea, doctrine, motif, whatever you want to call it, all through Scripture.

I mean, just think about it. It goes to the idea of the tabernacle, how animals had to be killed. And their blood had to be sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant. It goes to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, where all the animals, again, had to be sacrificed to be a covering for man's sin.

And so, this was the first action that we see. God stooping to cover, like, the humiliation of his creatures. Not pronouncing judgment on them. And, like, taking their life at that very minute.

[16 : 47] He did pronounce judgment, but it was more, not immediate. They didn't die right away. So, immediately, his grace was at work and preserved their lives. So, this is the first action of the gospel. You see a covering idea.

And what we want to call this, we call this in theology, we call it a type. A type. Like, what happened right here? The covering that God put on Adam and Eve is a type. And it's a symbol.

It's an example of something that foreshadows, like, a greater fulfillment, which would be Christ in the future. So, all through the Old Testament, we see this idea of, like, the covering.

And what the covering was to do was to hide man from the holiness of God. And so, the blood of bulls, goats, and lambs, like it even says, it cannot atone for man's sins.

It can't actually change anything between man and God. So, what happened? This, again, in Genesis 3, we see the promise of Christ.

[17 : 48] And Christ was the final and sufficient covering of man. And so, how did the work of Christ enable us to be justified before a holy God?

In this, we're going to kind of look. But we all know that a president can pardon somebody for their crime without, at the same time, punishing them for their crime.

He can't do that. He has to do one or the other. He has to condemn them or has to set them free.

But he can't do both. And we actually see that God can. Turn to 2 Corinthians.

This is kind of probably like the main theme verse for what we would see in justification. 2

Corinthians 5, verse 20. God cannot pardon a crime without payment of a penalty.

So, verse 20, chapter 5. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making His appeal through us.

[18 : 54] We implore you on behalf of Christ. Be reconciled to God. Some of us need that attitude.

We're sharing the gospel with people. It doesn't need to be like a nonchalant. Hey, you want to follow Jesus?

He says, I implore you. Be reconciled to God. Like, that's how serious He is. And sharing about the good news of Christ. Verse 21.

For our sake, He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. That verse is huge.

He said a lot in one sentence. So, how are we to be justified in the presence of God? How can we be made righteous in the presence of God? There's two parts to this verse, and we're going to look at both.

And both have to happen, or you cannot stand in God's presence. The first is, this is still under number two, how are we justified? The first one is forgiveness and pardon.

[19:57] That has to happen. So, Christ's death, shedding His blood, paid the debt of our unrighteousness. So, we talked before, I don't know how long ago this was, but I taught on how Christ on the cross satisfied the wrath of God, how He exhausted it.

We talked about propitiation and all that. Well, that's actually what happened. That has to happen first. Like, forgiveness, pardon, cancellation of sins.

That has to happen. But back to our verse, it says that God made Him to be sin who knew no sin.

Okay? What this means, it's talking about Christ here, but what that does not mean, and this is an important distinction, there's been a lot of debate about this, like, serious debate in the church.

But what this is not saying is that on the cross, Christ actually became a foul sinner. Like, while He was on the cross, He actually turned into a sinner like that, like He was all of a sudden really simple. Christ was innocent and blameless. That's what the Scripture teaches. And so He was on the cross being punished for sin.

[21:12] What this meant was that God treated Him, God treated Him as if He were a sinner. He was not. He was blameless. He was perfect. But He was treated as if He was a sinner.

He was treated as if He was guilty of all the sins of everyone who ever believed in Him, though He never committed one of them. That's what this means. Like, He Himself did not turn into a foul, festering sinner on the cross.

God treated Him that way on our behalf. So, that's why I read Ephesians 1, In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

So, cancellation of sin, forgiveness of sin, that has to happen. But here's a question for you. We are forgiven of our sins, okay?

But, does that actually make us righteous in God's sight? That's a huge question to ask. We are forgiven of sin, but does that actually make us righteous in God's sight?

[22:16] Because according to Proverbs 17, 15, it says, He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, are both alike an abomination to the Lord.

God cannot justify sinners. So, here's like three analogies for you, to kind of help you see this. If you get a really bad grade on a test, you know, you really mess it up, you get like an F, you fail, and your teacher comes and says, Hey, you know what?

You had a really rough week. I know what happened. I'm going to cancel that F, okay? Just don't worry about that test. You know, so cancellation of that bad grade. And your teacher is not saying, Hey, I'm giving you an A.

See that? They're just canceling your bad grade. When you're in debt to the bank, and you're in great debt, like up to your eyeballs in debt, and the bank calls you, this would never happen, but the bank calls you and says, Hey, we're going to cancel your debt.

Don't worry about the sum you owe us. Just forget about it. They're not saying, We're giving you a million dollars. They're just saying your debt's canceled. They're not saying you have a million dollars.

[23:27] At the same time, if you're in a court, and the judge pardons you for a crime that you did commit, he's not saying, You know, you're innocent. He's just saying, I forgive you. Go home.

But you did commit the crime. Like, this, we have to have this. We have to have an A. We have to have a million dollars. We have to be, we have to be called a law keeper, not a law breaker.

That's the difference between these two things. So, what happens? We're forgiven of our sin because of what Christ did. But secondly, there's a big word called imputation.

I'll spell that. I-M-P-U-T-A-T-I-O-N. Imputation. This means, you think of something that's not yours, that's belonging to someone else.

And, and actually, in that transaction, actually makes that thing belong to that person. So, the first part of that is that Christ lived a sinless life, a life of perfect obedience to God.

[24 : 33] In order to pay for human sin, it had to be a perfect, spotless sacrifice. It couldn't be, it couldn't be like one of us. We couldn't do that because we're just as foul as the next person. So, it had to be a pure offering, just like we see all through the Bible.

And Christ was without sin. It says in 1 Peter 2, 22, that Christ committed no sin, neither was any deceit found in His mouth.

We know that at the Transfiguration, where He actually was up on the mountain, and like He was seen in His glory, He was there with Elijah and Moses. And His disciples are just like, that is crazy. Like they're seeing this on the mountain, and they're being blown away by it. And they hear a voice come out of heaven, and it says, This is my beloved Son, of whom I am well pleased.

Listen to Him. That's what it says. And so, Christ was without sin. All He did was honoring to the Father. He survived every temptation.

[25 : 31] We know that He was tempted by Satan himself, you know, three different times. And every time, Christ resisted by the Word of God, just did not fall. So, everything He did was honoring to God.

So, He was the perfect sacrifice. And this is the second part of justification. It's where Christ's perfect obedience, the perfect obedience that He followed in His life, to honor the Father, is given to us.

It's like put into our account. Like a transaction. We took His righteousness, and He took our sin. It was like this exchange that happened. It's called the great exchange, like in theology.

It's what Martin Luther called it. So, God thinks that Christ's righteousness is belonging to us, and our sin is belonging to Christ. So, Romans 5, 19, just like this other verse we read, For as by one man, one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners.

It's talking about Adam. By Adam's disobedience, we all were made sinners. And then it says, So by the one man's obedience, being Christ, the many would be made righteous.

[26 : 44] So through Christ's perfect obedience, many would be made righteous. And that's prophesied about in Isaiah, that He will justify and make righteous many. A prophecy about Christ.

And so, a beautiful exchange. Martin Luther is a quote that he said about this. This is that mystery, which is rich in divine grace to sinners, wherein by a wonderful exchange of our sins, are no longer ours, but Christ.

And the righteousness of Christ, not Christ, but ours. He has emptied Himself of His righteousness, that He might clothe us with it, and fill us with it. And He has taken our evils upon Himself, that He might deliver us from them.

Lord Jesus, You have taken upon Yourself what is Mine, and have given Me what was Yours. You have taken upon Yourself what You were not, and given to us what we were not.

This exchange, like, Christ's righteousness given to us, into our account, and our sin going to Christ. a beautiful verse about this.

[27 : 54] Turn to Isaiah 61. And there is a lot of battles in the church today. A lot of us know that John Piper is.

He's been having this ongoing, serious battle with this one other guy about justification, and what it actually implies, and what it means. Isaiah 61, verse 10.

And this is talking about what is to come. Like, Christ is going to make this possible. It says, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

My soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with garments of salvation. He has covered me with a robe of righteousness. As a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and a bride adores herself with her jewels.

It's a picture of, like, being wrapped in Christ's righteousness. Like this idea that you have, like, this filthy garment on. It's nasty and sinful and foul. And you cannot approach God that way.

[29 : 00] So what happens? He clothes you in Christ's righteousness. It's like putting on a robe. And then that's, when he looks at it, that's what he sees. He's like, he sees the perfect obedience of Christ.

He's like, righteous. You know, it's a beautiful exchange that's happened. It leads into our next point, our next statement, number three. Justification comes only by grace through faith in Christ.

Grace through faith in Christ. Now, if you come back next week, we might talk a little bit more about this, but in the Reformation, we actually believe this year, and I know it's really foundational, too. If you call yourself an evangelical or a Protestant, this would be foundational. These are non-negotiables in our theology, what Scripture teaches. But, we believe that man is saved completely by grace alone.

And that's in Latin, like they use the Latin for this, sola gratia. We're saved by grace alone. Through faith alone. Sola fide. Faith alone.

[30 : 14] In Christ alone. Solus Christus. In Christ alone. And that's what we believe. Like, it's not anything added. It's not faith and good deeds and keeping it up and doing your best.

It's by faith alone. Through faith alone. In Christ alone. All by grace alone. And, like we go back to what we were talking about at the beginning, how our good deeds can attribute to salvation because God does not share His glory.

And because He's the only Savior, we believe in something called solidae gloria. To God alone be the glory. And, and all this from Scripture alone. Scripture our only authority.

Not, and, what the church might say. It's Scripture alone. Which is sola scriptura. We're going to talk about that more later. But, it comes completely by the unmerited favor of God.

You didn't do anything to save yourself. This is all God's work. when you try to add grace plus works, Paul says in Romans, I can't remember, I think it's Romans 11, this grace would no longer be grace.

[31 : 21] He just cancels it out. Grace is completely unmerited favor from God. And it says in Titus 3, verse 4, that we were justified by His grace alone.

Not, and, this, and that. Paul, Ephesians 2, for by grace you've been saved through faith. And this is not of yourself. It is the gift of God.

Not by works so that no one should boast. So, by grace alone, in Christ alone, through our faith alone. Alright? So, I need to talk briefly just about our union with Christ.

This idea of being in Christ. If you read Colossians, that's this constant thing He says, like we're in Christ. In Christ. What does that mean? It speaks to our spiritual union that we have with Christ.

A spiritual union we have with Christ. Throughout history, God has only appointed two men to represent the human race. Adam and Christ.

[32 : 21] Christ is called the second Adam. Adam's disobedience brought eternal death and separation from God. Christ's perfect obedience brought eternal life and reconciliation to God through those who believe in Him.

So, you see like the difference like Adam brought death and separation Christ brought eternal life and reconciliation with God and through only for those who have faith in Him.

So, you need to think about this too. It does say that we're saved through our faith through faith but not by faith. That's important. Because then you're trying to say that because I believed I have the right to be saved.

That's not what you can imply by that and that's not true. Your faith is not what saves you. Christ is what saves you. And the difference is if you're like drowning in the water and you are drowning like you're going down you do believe I'm sure that you believe man, if I just had a wrath that could save me.

You know, if I just had a wrath well that belief doesn't save you, does it? You actually have to have the wrath there to save you. You know, so just your belief in it doesn't really matter. You have to have it there.

[33 : 36] So, your salvation doesn't come from your faith. It comes from the object of your faith which is Christ. He alone saves you, not your faith. Christ alone saves you. And that's really important to get a hold of.

So, it's going to lead us to this idea again, not by works. I want to just show you one verse of that. Turn to Galatians 2 really fast.

Galatians 2 verse 16. I only have two more places where you return. So, our one after this.

Galatians 2 verse 16. So, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, our faith is what unites us to Christ.

So, if you say you're in Christ, what united you to Him was faith. Galatians 2 verse 16. Yet, we know that a person is not justified by works and law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So, also, we have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works and law because by the works of the law, no one will be justified.

[34 : 50] He says justify quite a few times in there. He says, not by works and not by the law can you be justified. It's very clear. And in this context, Paul is trying to dispute people from a Jewish background.

He was trying to say, yeah, cool to believe in Jews, but you also need to do all this other stuff in order to be saved and have a right saving of God. He's saying, no, not possible.

And he uses Abraham as an example on the Father and he lived a life of faith and that's what made him right before God. Chris had been talking a lot about that on Sunday mornings.

So, not by works, by grace alone, through faith alone and Christ alone are you justified. And our fourth point and last point, justification is a legal declaration by God.

Right? It's a legal declaration by God. It's declarative. It happens in an instant. It's instantaneous.

It's not this process you go through. Traditionally, in Roman theology, Roman Catholic theology, they teach that you have to make yourself acceptable in God's sight and earn the right to be justified by good deeds and by, you know, the works and all the other stuff that they pile up.

[36 : 12] We'll talk about that more next week, maybe. But, it's the idea that God helps those who help themselves. and this is a process you go through like sanctification. John, in a few weeks, is going to talk about sanctification and what that is.

But, sanctification is not justification. They're two different things. Being justified is a declaration saying, made righteous, like you are righteous.

You have kept the law. You are righteous. It is instantaneous and it happens at the moment of faith. rewind to what we've been talking about. Remember how I talked about being born again and regeneration is the act that God does to a dead sinner.

They come to life spiritually and the result is they have faith in Christ and they repent of their sins is what John's been talking about. And in that moment, in that very instant, they are justified before God.

It's a one-time deal. There's no double jeopardy, put it that way, in God's court. You won't be tried for the same crime if you are right before God, if you've been wrapped in His righteousness.

[37 : 19] It's an instantaneous thing, not a process that you go through. Once it's done once, it's never done again. So, what about some application here?

Some of you may be thinking, that's really cool. If I'm righteous before God and that can't change, it was a once and for all time deal, I can't lose that.

I might just, that's awesome. I can just sin and screw up and rebel against God all I want because I can't lose that if I'm made righteous in sight. And the Bible is aware of people who think that way.

In Romans 3.8, it would tell you, if you do think that way, that your condemnation is just. Because true faith in Christ, as John's been talking about last week, it produces a love for Christ and a desire to follow Him and obey Him, a true faith in Christ, and not a, well, I can go sin to my heart's content because I'm righteous in God's sight now.

So, if you think that way, you're probably not born again because God's grace is not, it doesn't produce that kind of result. It's a sinner who wants to keep sinning against God and fighting against God and say, man, I hate my sin, I hate my sin, and I want to follow Christ, I want to be like Christ, I want to honor Him, I want to have fellowship with God, that's what it looks like.

[38 : 46] So, stop fooling yourself and repent and believe the gospel, and come to Christ as your only righteousness. And, there might be some people here thinking, I do want to have right standing with God, I do want to be made righteous in God's sight, but I feel like I've got to get my life straight first, and I've got to do this first, and just abandon that, like just throw all your good works away, and just come by faith to Christ, and let Him save you.

Write down Philippians 3, and read that chapter, if that's what you think, because Paul, in that, he actually, the Apostle Paul talks about how he was the most religious guy out there, he had everything perfect on the outside, he talks about how he was a Pharisee, he had the right pedigree, everything, to be like a perfect guy, on the outside, but then he says at the end of that, I count all that as loss, he throws it all away, he counts it as rubbish, then at the end of that, he says, and he accepts Christ's righteousness by faith alone, so he throws away all these good works, he says, I want to have a righteousness righteousness of Christ that comes through faith, that's what he says at the end of that, so stop trying to get right with God that way, by doing good stuff, and just come to

Christ, and then, this is what I was talking about earlier, there's no condemnation from God or for others if you're justifying the sight, there's no double jeopardy like I was saying a minute ago, no trial for the same crime, and the last place I want you to turn is

Romans 8, Romans 8 verse 1, so whenever I have a fear of falling away, I'm like, man, I'm screwed up and God is going to condemn me for this, when that kind of enters your mind, Romans 8 verse 1 and 2 says, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death, so then jump down, the whole chapter is worth reading, so they try to make this point in the beginning, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, there's an idea in Christ Jesus, being united with Him, having His righteousness, flip down to verse 31, and it says this, what then shall we say to these things, if God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, who gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Really awesome. That whole chapter is so encouraging. He's like, who's going to condemn you? It doesn't matter if man condemns you, because God is the one who always can wait to die and he has justified you.

[42 : 00] He is the one who said, you are righteous in my sight. So, I know, back to our question at the beginning, what's going to happen when you stand before God and He says, you know, why should you come into heaven or whatever?

if I'm standing before God and I know my sin very well, let's say that Satan himself is accusing me, he's called the accuser of the brethren in Revelation, he stands before God making accusations against you, trying to get God to turn against you.

That's what the word devil means, it means like a slanderer, he just throws slanders on you. He can say all kinds of stuff. He did this, she did that. He can hurl every kind of insult at you and accuse you of every kind of heinous crime.

And he's done that, he's done that. And what God will probably say is if he looks at me or he looks at you, if you're in Christ, he'll just say, I don't see what you're talking about, I see the perfect righteousness of my son wrapped around him or her, and that'll be it.

That's what will happen. That's the beauty of being justified by Christ. God made him who had no sin to be sin on our behalf. So the result of this, if you understand this, you cannot lose this.

[43 : 28] It was because of what Christ did, his work, the great exchange, your sin on Christ, he paid the penalty for it, his perfect life of obedience, honored God, given to you and put on you for all time.

Christ will not do this again. It says that he died once for all time. That's it. If that's true, then you can have a right staying with God in God's court. And he'll say, righteous, you have kept the law perfectly.

My son has paid your penalty. You'll be wrapped in a robe of righteousness. So the result of this in your everyday life, to me, it brings joy and peace like you wouldn't believe.

like, I'm like, man, I've screwed up. Only the righteousness of Christ can bring this. I want to read this one verse to you. Just listen carefully.

It's Isaiah 32, 17-18. It talks about the effects of being justified. It says, And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness quietness and trust forever.

[44 : 40] If you are righteous, what will be the result? What's the effect of that? Peace, it says, in quietness and trust. Like, man, I am in Christ. I have Christ's righteousness.

And the result of that is peace and quietness. God goes on to say, My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, in quiet resting places.

So that is the result of what being righteous is. It brings you peace. It brings you joy. Like, man, there's nothing that can take that away from me. Christ has paid my penalty, and I have his righteousness, and I can be justified in God's sight.

This covering, Adam and Eve tried to run from God, hide from God. We don't have to hide from God anymore if you're clothed in the righteousness of Christ. And it's a beautiful thing.

I have no more time to really elaborate on it. You have to grasp one doctrine. I would go after that one. It's beautiful. And it's interconnected to all the ones I've been talking about.

[45 : 42] They're all connected. It's all by grace, alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone, all to God's glory. And that's the beauty of our salvation.

It can't be taken away or else Christ's work is meaningless and God's glory is diminished. And he's not going to let that happen at all. Once we're in him, we're in him forever.

So, let's just pray and then we'll just respond in song and in thankfulness to God. Holy Father, our Master, our Creator, our Redeemer, thank you for stooping, coming down, and rescuing those who were foul and rebellious against you who only deserve death and eternal separation, but you sent your only son to be an atoning sacrifice for us and to cause him to suffer the punishment of our disobedience.

And at the same time, you gave us his righteousness, his perfect life that he lived was accounted to us, it was put into our account, and we are wrapped in robes of righteousness, and you see us that way.

It is a beautiful picture, Lord, Lord, I have despaired and thought of myself unworthy, thought of myself not able to stand before you.

[47 : 18] I remember that I have been justified by your blood because of what you've done, and I can have peace with you. The result of that is peace because I have right standing with you, and I have quietness and trust in my spirit.

I can trust you through whatever is going on. It is not up to my works. I can't be saved by what I do, but completely through faith in your son and what he did on the cross.

I pray that we would get down and study your word and ask you to help us understand these things in a greater way. Lord, you have brought great glory to yourself and redeeming man from the sinful state that he was in and brought him back to yourself.

We love you, Lord. Help us to sing now and to honor you through our words. I pray that they would be from my heart and they wouldn't just be to sing along and be cool, but it would be a response for your justifying work and our right standing with you.

Lord, I pray this would move us to be missional. We would go out and tell others that they can't do this. They can't earn God's favor. They have to just come to Christ and be saved and repent of their sin.

[48 : 42] God, we don't understand the gospel ourselves if we're not sharing it with others. We fail. God, I pray you would give us that. Let us go out and proclaim your goodness, your grace, and your love to the lost around us or else we are hearers of the word and not doers and unbelievers.

God help us. We love you in Christ's name. Amen.