

THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST

TOPIC: I AM JUSTIFIED

TEXT: ROMANS 2:28–29; 5:1; 8:9; TITUS 3:5 EPHESIANS 2:8–9

INTRODUCTION

According to the Tyndale Bible Dictionary: Justification is the act of God in bringing sinners into a new covenant relationship with himself through the forgiveness of sins. It is a declarative act of God by which he establishes persons as righteous—that is, in right and true relationship to himself.¹

1. Justification By Faith Alone – Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:21

Martin Luther re-established the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The doctrine of justification teaches that all people are sinners and don't have the ability to deal effectively with their own sin, and that God gave his only Son, Jesus Christ, who died as a complete atonement for sin. Everyone is invited to respond in simple trust without any special claims.

Q: Why is this important for us to know as believers and be able to share with the unchurched?

2. Justification is About Covenant – Genesis 15:6, Jeremiah 31:33-34, Romans 11:1

The act of justification is not about law but about covenant. Covenant is all about relationship.

There are several different covenants in the Bible. Some are conditional and some are unconditional. Abraham, who was reckoned as righteous, was brought into a personal relationship with God by virtue of his response of faith, to the covenant offered by God.

When God speaks of covenant with his people, he speaks of coming together in a remarkable union of eternal oneness—a union that is not to be broken. God told Abraham. "I will be your God". It was a covenant of love; an everlasting relationship.

Q: Why do think we struggle with the concept of an everlasting relation?

3. Are You in a Religion or Relationship?

There is a common belief in today's church that Judaism teaches salvation by works of the Law, compared to Christianity being a religion of grace. However, the common teaching of first-century Judaism was that salvation is by God's mercy, not by human achievement.

It should be noted that the first church was entirely Jewish. Once Greek and Roman philosophies slithered into the church, a dualistic mind-set, occupied with separation, condemnation, elected people being separated from damned people, and legal justification ideas that didn't really help us with learning to become more like Jesus, and "muddied the waters".

The important thing Jesus taught—love God and love others—was sent to the back burner.

Q: How is it possible for us to experience assurance when the people of God are so divided?

Think about your relationship with God. Think about your church.

4. Part of the Family of God (Spiritual not Physical) – Titus 3:5, Romans 2:28-29

Salvation or justification is a gift of God; no one can obtain it by mere conformity to any ceremonial ritual. Belonging to the seed of Abraham [God's family] is not physical but spiritual. It involves "circumcision of the heart" rather than earning one's way into his family through personal achievement.

Justification makes us part of God's family—but it is not a legal declaration that an unrighteous person is righteous, but a covenant relationship of being in union with and abiding in Christ.

Q: What do we get from knowing that we are part of God's family?

5. God's Spirit is in You – Romans 8:9

Abiding in Christ—relationship, not religion—is the way to having a fulfilling and significant life. Only then will that intimacy with God become evident in every area of your life.

Q: How does living in the Spirit help with the fact that we are justified?

Conclusion

In becoming partakers of the union with Christ, there is a work God does and a work we have to do. God does His work by moving us to do our work. The work of God is hidden and silent; what we do is something distinct and tangible. Conversion and faith, prayer and obedience, are conscious acts of which we can give a clear account, while the spiritual quickening and strengthening that come from above are secret and beyond the reach of human sight.

In all your interaction and engaging with the blessed Word, remember the same truth: abide in Jesus, your wisdom. Study much to know the written Word; but study more to know the living Word, in whom you are of God.