

GraceLife Church Presents . . .

Soteriology

The Purpose,
Accomplishment, Plan, and
Application of Redemption

The Application of Redemption

Justification

- ❖ Effectual Calling
- ❖ Regeneration
- ❖ Conversion: Repentance and Faith
- ❖ Justification

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

- ❖ One of the great fears in the doctrine of justification (by faith apart from works) is that it leads to licentiousness, antinomianism, or sinful living.
- ❖ Remember that justification comes after regeneration.
- ❖ Nobody is justified without also being regenerated, born-again, made alive with Christ—a new creation.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

- ❖ The importance of this doctrine cannot be overstated.
- ❖ Without justification the other elements we have been studying— calling, regeneration, repentance, and even faith—would accomplish nothing.
- ❖ Justification is *the* good news of the gospel.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

- ❖ Martin Luther famously said *sola fide*, “is the article with and by which the church stands, without which it falls.”

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

“The article of justification is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler, and the judge over all kinds of doctrines; it preserves and governs all the church doctrine and raises up our conscience before God. Without this article the world is utter death and darkness.”

Martin Luther; quoted in, R.C. Sproul, *Faith Alone*, 83.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

Job 25:4 “How then can a man be just with God?
Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?”

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

Exod 34:6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; **7** who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

Ps 130:3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

- ❖ Our appreciation of justification is directly related to our sense of the holiness of God, the guilt of our sin, and the reality of judgment.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

- ❖ Without justification . . .
 - ❖ We could never have fellowship with God.
 - ❖ We could never be objects of mercy.
 - ❖ We could never receive God's favour.
 - ❖ We could only experience His wrath.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

“The doctrine of justification has to do with our status before the judgment of God. That every person will ultimately be called into account before God is central to the teaching of Jesus. He warns that the secret things of our lives will be made manifest before the Father and that every idle word we have spoken will be brought into judgment. The whole world—every man, woman, and child,—will come before the final divine tribunal. We will all come to that place, at that time, as either unjustified, or justified sinners.”

R.C. Sproul, *Faith Alone*, 87.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

“Far too frequently we fail to entertain the gravity of this fact [that ‘we all are all wrong with him because we have all sinned’]. Hence the reality of our sin and the reality of the wrath of God upon us for our sin do not come into our reckoning. This is the reason why the grand article of justification does not ring the bells in the innermost depth of our spirit.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 123.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

“If we are to appreciate that which is central in the gospel, if the jubilee trumpet is to find its echo in our hearts, our thinking must be revolutionized by the realism of the wrath of God, of the reality and gravity of our guilt, and of divine condemnation.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 124.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

- ❖ The doctrine of justification by faith alone became known as the material cause of the reformation.
- ❖ The formal cause was the issue of authority, *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone). Scripture brought the reformers to understand that justification was by faith alone.
- ❖ The plan (form) that caused the reformation was Scripture. The issue (material, out of which) that caused it was *sola fide*.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

“Therefore we must now discuss these matters thoroughly. And we must so discuss them as to bear in mind that this is the main hinge on which religion turns, so that we devote the greater attention and care to it.”

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 726 (3.11.1).

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Introduction

1. Definition of Justification.
2. Explanation of Justification.
3. Refutation of the Roman Catholic View.
4. Conclusion

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

- ❖ The first thing we need to realize is that justification in the OT and NT involves righteousness.
- ❖ This is not as obvious in English as it is in Hebrew and Greek.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

Job 25:4 NASB How then can a man be just with God?

Job 25:4 ESV How then can man be in the right before God?

Job 25:4 NKJV How then can man be righteous before God?

Job 25:4 HCSB How can a person be justified before God?

Job 25:4 BHS וַיִּמָּה-יִצְדֵּק אֲנֹשׁ עִם-אֱלֹהִים

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

Gen 15:6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Gen 15:6 BHS: וְהֵאֱמַן בַּיהוָה וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה

righteous, just

to reckon, think of,
count, account

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

- ❖ צַדִּיק (tsedeq) righteous, upright, just
- ❖ צַדִּיקָה (tsadqah) to be right, just, justified

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

- ❖ Similarly, the word group in the NT Greek includes both righteousness and justification.
- ❖ δίκαιος: (*dikaios*) upright, just, fair, right (79x)
- ❖ δικαιοσύνη: (*dikaiousuné*) Justice, righteousness, uprightness (92x)
- ❖ δικαίωσις: (*dikaiosis*) Justification (2x)
- ❖ δικαίω: (*dikaioō*) to pronounce righteous, acquit, declare righteous, justify (39x)

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

- ❖ To justify means to declare righteous, to acquit, or to count one as righteous.
- ❖ This is definitely a courtroom term.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

- ❖ Charles Spurgeon on justification from the courtroom:
The accused, charged with a crime, found not guilty =
justified of the charges, proven to be just in the matter.
- ❖ Difference in our justification is that we are guilty.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

“Let us explain what these expressions mean . . . He is said to be justified in God’s sight who is both reckoned righteous in God’s judgment and has been accepted on account of his righteousness. Indeed, as iniquity is abominable to God, so no sinner can find favor in his eyes in so far as he is a sinner and so long as he is reckoned as such. Accordingly, wherever there is sin, there also the wrath and vengeance of God show themselves. Now he is justified who is reckoned in the condition not of a sinner, but of a righteous man; and for that reason, he stands firm before God’s judgment seat while all sinners fall.”

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 726 (3.11.2).

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

“Justified by faith is he who, excluded from the righteousness of works, grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God’s sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man. Therefore, we explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as righteous men. And we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.”

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 726–27, (3.11.2).

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

“We define justification as God’s gracious, legal verdict in respect of those who believe in Christ, forgiving their sins and declaring them righteous through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.”

Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 367.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

“Therefore, we may define justification as that instantaneous act of God whereby, as a gift of his grace, he imputes to a believing sinner the full and perfect righteousness of Christ through faith alone and legally declares him perfectly righteous in his sight, forgiving the sinner of all unrighteousness and thus delivering him from all condemnation.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 612.

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

“Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.”

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Definition

- ❖ Aspects of Justification:
- ❖ The idea of God reckoning, thinking, and accepting us as righteous.
- ❖ This reckoning is said to be instantaneous, i.e. not a process or gradual change.
- ❖ The idea of a legal declaration.
- ❖ Includes both the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of (Christ's) righteousness.
- ❖ Comes to us *through* faith or *by* faith

The Application of Redemption

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

- ❖ Justification involves a legal declaration of righteousness not a transformation to righteousness.
- ❖ Justification is a change of *status* not a change of *being*.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

- ❖ Justification takes us into the courtroom where the defendant is not changed but a verdict is rendered.
- ❖ The idea of a legal declaration is what separates the Protestant understanding of justification from the Catholic understanding.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

- ❖ There are two ways to see the idea of legal declaration.
 - ❖ First, in texts where justification cannot possibly mean 'to make righteous.'
 - ❖ Second, in text where justification is contrasted with condemnation.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Deut 25:1 “If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, **2** then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt.

- ❖ In the courtroom a judge does not make one righteous, he pronounces a verdict of righteous or guilty.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Isa 5:22 Woe to those who . . . **23** . . . justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Prov 17:15 He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous,
Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Now it would not be an abomination to the Lord to make the wicked upright. It would be a highly commendable thing if we could convert a wicked man and make him a righteous man. . . The meaning is more than obvious: to justify the wicked is not to make him upright but simply to declare him to be righteous when he is not. The abomination consists in giving a judgment contrary to truth and fact.

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 126.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Luke 7:26 “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. **27** “This is the one about whom it is written,

‘BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU,
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.’

28 “I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” **29**

When all the people and the tax collectors heard *this*, they acknowledged God’s justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Luke 7:26 “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. **27** “This is the one about whom it is written,

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Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

- ❖ The NASB footnote at ‘they acknowledged God’s justice’ says “or justified God.”
- ❖ Look at the ESV translation. . .

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Luke 7:29 ESV (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John,

Luke 7:29 USB4 Καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἀκούσας καὶ οἱ τελῶναι ἐδικαίωσαν τὸν θεὸν βαπτισθέντες τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

- ❖ They ‘justified God’ could not possibly mean ‘they made God righteous.’
- ❖ No, they declared God to be righteous.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Luke 16:15 And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Matt 12:37 “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

- ❖ The other way to see that justification is a legal declaration is where it is contrasted with condemnation.
- ❖ Condemnation is a declaration of guilt, it does not make someone wicked.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Prov 17:15 He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous,
Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Rom 8:33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; **34** who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

- ❖ In the courtroom setting a judge does not make someone guilty he declares them guilty (and thus condemns).

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

“To ‘condemn’ someone is to declare that person guilty. The opposite of condemnation is justification, which, in this context, must mean ‘to declare someone not guilty.’”

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

“This is also evident from the fact that God’s act of justifying is given as Paul’s answer to the possibility of someone bringing an accusation or a ‘charge’ against God’s people; such a declaration of guilt cannot stand in the face of God’s declaration of righteousness.”

Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 316.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

Rom 5:18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

“Justification is a legal, or forensic, declaration of righteousness, not an actual impartation or infusion of righteousness. It describes what God *declares* about the believer, not what he *does to change* the believer. In fact, justification itself effects no actual change whatsoever in the sinner’s nature or character.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 612.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

“This is what is meant when we insist that justification is forensic. It has to do with a judgment given, declared, pronounced; it is judicial or juridical or forensic. The main point of such terms is to distinguish between the kind of action which justification involves and the kind of action involved in regeneration. Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 127–28.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Legal Declaration

“In a similar way [to a courtroom verdict], the justification spoken of in Scripture is God’s divine verdict of ‘not guilty—fully righteous’ pronounced on the sinner.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 612.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Declaration of Righteousness

- ❖ The declaration of justification is 'righteous.'
- ❖ God declares guilty sinners righteous on the basis of Christ's righteousness imputed to them.
- ❖ God does not abominate this declaration (Prov 17:15) because Christ paid the penalty for sin and the guilty sinner is now seen 'in Christ' rather than 'in Adam.'

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Declaration of Righteousness

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “**BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**”

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Declaration of Righteousness

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; **20** because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Declaration of Righteousness

Rom 3:21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; **26** for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Declaration of Righteousness

Rom 3:27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **28** For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Justification

Explanation of the Doctrine

Justification is a Declaration of Righteousness

Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,