

# **“The Doctrine of Justification”**

## **Romans 3:20-28**

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### **I. Introduction**

- A. I want to look together with you at the essential doctrine of justification
  - 1. It answers the important question of “How does God save sinners?”
  - 2. The answer to that question is simple, but it is not simplistic
    - a) Illustration- “In Christ” (John 3:16)
    - b) (Acts 16:31)
  - 3. On the other hand, who can explain how a holy, righteous, just God can justify an unholy, unrighteous man?
  - 4. Paul takes the whole book of Romans to unfold this deep truth
    - a) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for...” (Romans 1:16)
    - b) “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17)
  - 5. This was the cry of the Protestant Reformation
    - a) “By grace alone”
    - b) “Through faith alone”
    - c) “In Christ alone”
  - 6. Now, I want to take this text in Romans 3 and give you seven facts on how God justifies and saves sinners

### **II. Apart From the Deeds of the Law (Romans 3:20-21)**

- A. No one can be justified by keeping the Law
  - 1. What does the word “justified” mean?
    - a) It is a legal or forensic term belonging to the Law courts. It is the opposite of condemnation. It is the pronouncement of a judge that a person is righteous.
    - b) Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ based on the finished work of Christ on the cross
    - c) The Law says “behave,” but the gospel says “believe”
    - d) The Law says “do,” but the gospel says “done”
  - 2. The purpose of the Law (v. 20b)
    - a) Not to cleanse you from sin but to convince you of sin
    - b) Illustration- Like a thermometer
  - 3. But now, there is a righteousness of God without or apart from the Law (v. 21)
    - a) It was seen in the Old Testament (v. 21b)
      - 1) By the Law
        - a. The sacrificial types
        - b. (Genesis 3:15)
      - 2) The prophets
        - a. (Isaiah 53)
        - b. Jesus (Luke 24)
      - 3) You can’t be justified by keeping the Law
- B. Through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 22a)

1. Paul mentions “faith” or “belief” four times
    - a) The only way to be justified before God is by faith in Jesus Christ
  2. This is “faith alone,” not “faith plus works”
    - a) The gift is salvation, not faith
    - b) (Ephesians 2:8-9)
  3. Does God regenerate you before faith?
    - a) No
    - b) “But these are written, that ye might believe...” (John 20:31)
    - c) “As Moses lifted up the serpent...” (John 3:14)
    - d) (Acts 16:31)
  4. What is faith?
  5. What is the object of our faith?
    - a) Illustration- Abraham
      - 1) Faith, not works
      - 2) Faith, not rights
      - 3) Faith, not law
      - 4) Faith in God’s promise
    - b) Faith is the eye that looks to Him, the hand that receives from Him, and the mouth that drinks of Him.
- C. It is for all (vv. 22b-23)
1. The gospel is for everyone
    - a) Jew and Gentile
    - b) (Romans 1:16)
  2. “...that believe: for there is no difference” (v. 22)
  3. “All have sinned...” (v. 23)
- D. It’s by grace (v. 24a)
1. The source of our justification is the grace of God
  2. Only the Bible teaches that God saves sinners by grace alone through faith alone
  3. God is love, but His love is manifested toward us by His grace and mercy
  4. What is grace?
    - a) “Freely without a cause” (v.24)
  5. What is mercy?
  6. Salvation from the beginning to the end is the initiative of God’s love, mercy, and grace
    - a) It is God’s amazing grace
- E. At great cost to God (vv. 24b-25)
1. The source of our justification is God’s grace
  2. The means of our justification is faith in Christ
  3. The ground for our justification is the cross of Christ
  4. Our salvation is a gift of God’s grace, but it is not cheap. It cost God the life of His Son.
    - a) If you want to go to Heaven, you can’t go around the cross
    - b) The cross is the wisdom of God
    - c) How can God be just when justifying the unjust?
  5. Two key words to understanding the cross
    - a) Redemption (v. 24)
    - b) Propitiation (v. 25)
      - 1) Redemption

- a. It means “to buy out and set free”
      - i. Illustration- The Passover in Egypt
    - b. The price was blood
      - i. His death on the cross
  - 2) Propitiation
    - a. What is propitiation?
      - i. It is the work of the cross
      - ii. It is the satisfying of God’s holy, righteous wrath
        - 1. Illustration- Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
        - 2. Illustration- Jesus on the cross
- F. It is done in perfect justice (v. 26)
  - 1. The cross is the redemption of sinners
  - 2. The propitiation of God’s wrath
  - 3. The vindication of His justice
  - 4. God, who is love, had a problem. How to justify the unjust?
    - a) On the cross. God is just in justifying
- G. It excludes boasting (vv. 27-28)
  - 1. In the New Testament, there are three different metaphors that are used to describe the meaning of justification
    - a) A clothing metaphor
    - b) A banking metaphor
    - c) A courtroom metaphor
      - 1) No boasting!
      - 2) Illustration- Jesus in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector
      - 3) (Luke 18:9)
  - 2. Paul said, “God forbid that I should boast” (Galatians 6:14)
    - a) Illustration- Saved by a lifeguard
    - b) Salvation is by
      - 1) Grace alone
      - 2) Through faith alone
      - 3) In Christ alone
      - 4) (Ephesians 2:8-9)