

Basic Christian Beliefs (Class 10) –

Salvation: Pt. 4 (Justification)

REVIEW: THE BIG PICTURE OF SALVATION

- Review
 - Ask: Who can tell me what we talked about last week? (Repentance)
 - Ask: What is the analogy we are using for salvation (Puzzle)
 - Ask: Who can tell me the four parts of salvation that we have talked about thus far?
(Effective calling, Regeneration, Faith, Repentance)

INTRODUCING JUSTIFICATION

- What are we studying?
 - Have students read the following verses:
 - **Romans 4:25** ⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
 - **Romans 5:18** ¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.
 - **Romans 3:22-24** ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
 - Ask: Based on these verses, what do you think we are studying today? (Justification)
- What is justification?
 - Ask: What is justification? (allow for a variety of answers)
 - Say: Once again, we are going to look at what the Westminster Shorter Catechism has to say about this piece of salvation:
 - Have a student come up and read the WSC question 33: Justification is an act of God's free grace whereby he pardons our sin and accept us as righteous, only for the righteousness of God imputed to us and received by faith alone
 - Say: Now we are going to use this definition to help us better understand this concept. Let's break down this definition of justification into its three parts:
 - Say: First of all, the definition says that God pardons our sin and accepts us as righteous. Another way to say this is that God DECLARES us as righteous (Write "God declares us righteous" on the board)

- Say: Secondly, this definition says that justification happens only because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. (Write “Christ’s righteousness imputed” on the board.)
- Say: Thirdly, this definition says that justification is received by faith alone. (Write, “by faith alone” on the board)
- Say: Now we are going to look at these three parts of the definition in order to study what the Bible says about justification.

JUSTIFICATION IS THE ACT OF GOD DECLARING US RIGHTEOUS

- Justification involves a legal setting
 - Say: First of all we are going to consider what it means that God pardons our sin and declares us righteous before God.
 - Ask: Let’s assume for a moment that we were not in a church setting studying the Bible. If you heard it said that someone was “PARDONED for something they did, and that they were DECLARED RIGHTEOUS or DECLARED INNOCENT, what would you assume was taking place? In other words, what setting would you normally hear terms like, PARDONED, or DELCARED RIGHTEOUS or DECLARED INNOCENT? (A courtroom or legal setting).
 - Say: That’s right, if you were to hear these terms thrown about in most settings, you would think that people are talking about a trial taking place. And it is not a coincidence that the language of pardon and declaration of righteousness is used to speak of the biblical idea of justification – the biblical idea of justification actually involves the idea of a trial. But before we get into the Biblical picture of a trial, let’s have some volunteers come forward to enact a little trial of our own today.
- Example: A Courtroom Narrative:
- Justification is the act of God, our judge, declaring us a righteous
 - Say: In this funny courtroom drama, we saw a trial taking place. In this trial, there was a judge who was considering whether or not the person on trial, (student’s name), was innocent. If the judge declared him guilty, then we might say that (student’s name) was CONDEMNED. IF, on the other hand, the judge declared that (student’s name) was innocent, we might say that (student’s name) was JUSTIFIED.
 - Say: And this is what Justification is: the judge looks at the person on trial and DECLARES that he is NOT guilty, but instead RIGHTEOUS AND INNOCENT. In the Bible, justification is the act of God, as our judge, looking at us on trial, and DECLARING US RIGHTEOUS. Justification is the act of God declaring us righteous.
 - Say: Now let’s look at some Biblical passages which illustrate this concept of justification. As I read these passages, I want you to raise your hand whenever you hear anything that sounds like a trial. Afterwards, we will discuss how this relates to justification.
 - Romans 8:33 ³³ Who will bring any **charge** against those whom God has chosen? It is God who **justifies**.

- Psalm 58:11 ¹¹ Then men will say, "Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who **judges** the earth."
- Romans 5:16 ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The **judgment** followed one sin and brought **condemnation**, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought **justification**.
- Say: The idea is that all of mankind is on trial. God is our JUDGE. And we stand on TRIAL before him. And we are waiting to hear his judgment – his declaration. Are we going to be declared righteous or are we going to be declared guilty? If he declares us guilty of sin, then we are condemned – condemned to a life of sin and misery in this life, and then condemned to hell in the life to come. If he declares us righteous, then we are justified and saved – and brought into fellowship with God and able to enjoy God's love in this life and in the life to come.

JUSTIFICATION HAPPENS BECAUSE OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

- Review:
 - Ask: Okay, let's review, what are we talking about today? (Justification)
 - Ask: What kind of setting does justification take place in? (A courtroom)
 - Ask: So, as we stand before God our judge, what is justification (God declaring us righteous)
- The Problem of Justification: Our Sin
 - Say: Think back to our courtroom drama. Let's say it was obvious to everyone, including the judge, that (student's name) actually did steal the DVD. Assuming the judge was going to be just and fair, would he justify or condemn (student's name). (A: That's right, if the defendant was guilty, then a fair and just judge would declare him guilty and condemn him. That is simply being just).
 - Ask: Well then, let me ask you this question: have you and I ever sinned? (Yes)
 - Ask: So you might say that we are guilty of sinning (Yes).
 - Ask: So then, as you and I stand on trial before our just God and he is looking to determine whether or not we are guilty of sinning, what is he going to decide if he sees us? (That we are guilty of sin).
 - Ask: And if God declares us guilty of sin, are we condemned or justified (condemned).
 - Say: Do you see the problem with justification? Justification assumes that God looks at us and declares us righteous. But in fact the reality is we are miserable sinners. And if God is going to be just, he cannot declare innocent and righteous those who are guilty.
 - Have students read:

- **Numbers 14:18** 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.'
 - **Job 10:14** If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.
 - **Romans 1:18** ¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
 - Say: This is the problem we are working with in talking about justification. God is JUST and WILL NOT JUSTIFY those who are GUILTY. God is Holy and HATES sin. He LOATHES it. He hates sin more than you could possibly hate anything on this earth. And he punishes sin as a just God. This is the problem with justification. We are sinners standing on trial before a just God who is absolutely hates sin.
- The Solution of Justification: Christ's Righteousness
 - Say: And this is where the second part of the definition of justification comes in (circle the second part of the definition on the board). The first part of the definition says that we are declared righteous before God. And the second part says that this happens only because of Christ's righteousness imputed to us.
 - Ask: Does anyone know what imputation is? (Allow for answers)
 - Say: You can think of it as an act of moving something from one person to another.
 - **Example: Call on two volunteers and have them come to the front of the class. Give one volunteer a shirt with the word (SIN) taped on the front of it. Give another volunteer a shirt with the word (RIGHTEOUSNESS) taped on the front of it. Have each student put on their shirt so that the words are visible to everyone. Tell the class that one of these volunteers represents Jesus and one of these volunteers represents man. Have them guess which is which. (Righteousness = Jesus, Sin = Man). Tell the class that we are going to look at some bible passages that illustrate the concept of imputation, and these volunteers are going to then demonstrate this for us.**
 - Have students read the following passages
 - Isaiah 53:6 ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21a: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us
 - Ask: According to these passages, what transaction took place with Christ? In other words, what did God put on Jesus? (Our Sins)

- Say: So we to use the language of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, we might say that our sin is IMPUTED (or moved) to Jesus. Our sin is put on Christ, and we have it no more. This part of how we are justified. This is also why some people have explained justification by saying justification = just-as-if-I never sinned.
 - **Ask: So what do our volunteers need to do in order demonstrate this? (Have “Man” volunteer give his “Sin” shirt to” Jesus.” For now, Jesus keeps his “Righteousness shirt.” Have him put on the Sin t-shirt).**
 - Say: This is why Jesus died. He died because God had put on Christ the sins of all believers.
- Say: So now we are getting somewhere. Now our “Man” can stand before God without sin. Now he stands a chance in this trial. But wait a second, there is still a problem. You see, God doesn’t just require that man NOT sin. Have a student read:
- Joshua 22:5 ⁵ But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul."
 - Galatians 3:10 ¹⁰ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."
 - Say: The problem is that God judges us righteous only if we have no sin AND we have perfectly obeyed God’s law. You see, not only do we need to give Jesus our sin, but we need Jesus to give us HIS righteous.
- Have students read:
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - Romans 5:19 ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
 - You see, not only does God remove our sin, but he also GIVES us Christ’s righteousness. And this is what imputation is. It is the act God moving our sin onto Christ and the act of Christ moving his righteousness onto us.
 - **Ask: SO what do our volunteers needs to do in order to demonstrate this? (Have “Christ” take off both of his shirts and give the “Righteousness” shirt back to “man,” and have him put back on his “Sin” t-shirt).**

- Say: And *****THIS***** is how are justified. You see, if we approach God with our “sin shirt” on, this God has no choice but to declare us guilty and condemn us. However, if we stand before God on trial with our sin shirt on Christ, and Christ’s righteousness shirt on us, *****THEN ***** we are able to stand trial and be justified.
 - Ask: So when God looks at us in Christ, does he declare us to be righteous or unrighteous??? (righteous)
 - Ask: And whose righteousness does God see? (Jesus’ righteousness)
- Say: We are justified when God declares us righteous, and he **ONLY** does this because we are wearing Christ’s righteousness.

CONCLUSION: CONNECTING JUSTIFICATION TO FAITH

- Say: First of all we considered how justification is the act of God declaring us righteous. Secondly, we considered how justification is possible only because of Christ’s righteousness imputed to us. Finally, the third part of the definition reminds us how justification connects to the large picture of salvation. Justification is through faith in Jesus Christ. Not by works.
 - **Romans 3:20, 23-24** ²⁰ Therefore no one will be **declared righteous** in his sight by observing the **law**... ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
 - **Galatians 2:15-16** ¹⁵ "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
- **ONLY** as we respond with faith to God’s effective call and regeneration are we justified. Remember, we are looking at the larger picture of salvation as a whole. We have talked about effective calling, regeneration, faith, and repentance thus far. Justification fits into this puzzle as well to help us understand what happens in salvation.
- Just remember: Justification is one part of salvation. And justification is God’s act of declaring us righteous because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.

Basic Christian Beliefs

Class 10 (Handouts)

Review:

Who can tell me what we talked about last week? _____

What is the analogy we are using for salvation? _____

What four parts of salvation that we have talked about thus far?

Our Topic for the Day: _____

What are the three parts of the WSC definition?

(1) _____

What is the setting in which justification takes place?

(2) _____

What is the problem with justification? _____

What is God's solution to this problem? _____

What does imputation mean? _____

(3) _____

When God justifies us, whose righteousness does he see?

Example: A Courtroom Narrative:

Bailiff: All rise for the honorable judge _____ (“Judge’s” name) . Judge _____ (“judge’s name) presiding. Today’s trial involves a case of thievery. The accused (student B’s name) is charged with the crime of stealing a DVD from (student C’s name)....Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2, I believe it was.

Judge: (to defendant) How do you plead?

Defendant: Not guilty, your honor.

Plaintiff: (angry) OUTRAGEOUS!!! He clearly stole my DVD!!!

Judge: (Banging gavel) Order!!! Plaintiff, you will get your turn to speak. (Addressing defendant), have you prepared your defense???

Defendant: Yes, your honor. Your honor, there is no way that I stole Sisterhood to the Traveling Pants 2. First of all it is against my moral sensibilities. Secondly I absolutely HATE the movie, “Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2,” despite the fact that I thought “Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 1” was the best movie ever made. Thirdly, I have an alibi. At the time of the theft, I was in my neighborhood walking my pet iguana. Ask any of my neighbors – they all saw me. Finally, I would argue that the Plaintiff is just trying to get back at me for what happened at school yesterday. He wanted to borrow my deodorant after gym class, and when I said “No,” he became upset and told me that he would get back at me somehow!

Judge: (Addressing defendant) Alright, we have heard your defense. (Now addresses plaintiff), would you please tell us why you believe that the defendant stole your Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2 DVD?

Plaintiff: It’s simple. (Defendant’s name) has been planning to steal my DVD for weeks. Ever since I bought the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2, he hasn’t been able to keep his hands off of it. Two days ago, he asked me if he could borrow my DVD, and when I told him “NO,” he told me that I’d be sorry and that he would get my DVD one way or another. And then, when I called him on the phone yesterday to asked if he stole my DVD, he was crying! I asked him if was crying because he was watching my stolen DVD, and he said, No, that he was crying because he was crying because he was watching a heartwarming episode of Oprah! But I didn’t believe him for one minute, because Oprah wasn’t even on at that hour!

Judge: Alright, thank you plaintiff. Now I am going to take some time to consider both arguments before I come to a decision.