

Justification: Righteous in God's Sight

Titus 3:4-11

Philippians 3:2-11

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

What's the problem? Why the series?

- Approaches to understanding Paul that have led to undermining Biblical justification...
- Appearance of these errors in popular books affecting the ordinary person in the church...
- The importance of a legal model as the sphere in which justification is understood and taught...
- The practical implications for us as a church...

What is the Biblical and Pauline teaching on justification? What is justification? No better wording than that of the Westminster Confession (in modern English).

Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, (Rom. 3:22,24–25, Rom. 4:5) in which he pardons all their sins, accepts and accounts them [their persons] righteous in his sight; (2 Cor. 5:19,21, Rom. 3:22,24,25,27,28) not for any thing worked in them, or done by them, (Tit. 3:5,7, Eph. 1:7) but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, imputed by God to them, (Rom. 5:17–19, Rom. 4:6–8) and received by faith alone. (Acts 10:43, Gal. 2:16, Phil. 3:9)

Although Christ, by his obedience and death, made a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of those that are justified; (Rom. 5:8–10,19) yet in as much as God accepts the satisfaction from a guarantee, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this guarantee, his own only Son, (1 Tim. 2:5–6, Heb. 10:10, Matt. 20:28, Dan. 9:24,26, Isa. 53:4–6,10–12, Heb. 7:22, Rom. 8:32, 1 Pet. 1:18–19) imputing his righteousness to them, (2 Cor. 5:21) and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, (Rom. 3:24–25) which also is his gift, (Eph. 2:8) their justification is to them of free grace. (Eph. 1:7)

Justifying faith is a saving grace, (Heb. 10:39) wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit (2 Cor. 4:13, Eph. 1:17–19) and word of God, (Rom. 10:14–17) whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, (Acts 2:37, Acts 16:30, John 16:8–9, Rom. 5:6, Eph. 2:1, Acts 4:12) not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, (Eph. 1:13) but receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, (John 1:12, Acts 16:31, Acts 10:43) and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation. (Phil. 3:9, Acts 15:11)

Philippians 3:2-11

Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are its fruits, (Gal. 3:11, Rom. 3:28) nor as if the grace of faith, or any act of faith, were imputed to him for his justification; (Rom. 4:5, Rom. 10:10) but only as it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and his righteousness. (John 1:12, Phil. 3:9, Gal. 2:16)

We believe that this grand summary of the doctrine of justification is true and in accordance with the Word of God. While there are many simpler versions, this speaks more fully of what the Bible teaches.

In simple form, justification is the legal act of God to impute, or to credit Christ's righteousness to the sinner so that the sinner has a right standing before God based solely on what Christ has done in His obedience and death on the cross which is applied by faith alone, and is not by our works either before or after conversion. We are accounted righteous before God because of Christ through faith in Him.

- God's righteousness in Christ
- Received by faith alone
- Imputed or credited to our account
- Giving us right standing before God now and at the last day

Our aim is talk together about a contemporary assault on this great truth.

Authentic: What does Paul say about the justification and its centrality to the Christian faith? We will be looking at two important texts on that tonight.

Historic: How did the New Perspective develop and become the impetus for a new revival of an old error? Dale Evans will be helping us with that next week.

Polemic: What form does the old error on justification take today? Pastor Chad will be helping us with the attack on justification as imputed righteousness.

God's Righteousness Received

Titus 3:4-11

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

God's definitive salvation is grounded in His own goodness, loving kindness and mercy.

We not saved by our own works, even those done in righteousness.

Our salvation is applied to us by the Holy Spirit who regenerates us and renews us.

We are justified by God's grace. This assertion is contra our having a right standing before God based on our works.

Those who have been justified must be taught and exhorted to do good works.

Those who continue to teach error (particularly as it relates to law and righteousness) are to be confronted, silenced and if necessary, expelled.

Those who teach error expose themselves as being warped, sinful and self-condemned.

Philippians 3:2-11

Self Righteousness Rejected

Philippians 3:2-11

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Warns against those who teach righteousness by Law of any kind.

Characterizes the true circumcision:

Worship by the Spirit

Glory in Christ

Put no confidence in flesh

Locates false righteousness in Judaism and Phariseeism

Paul as an example of Pharisaical righteousness.

Paul's own rejection of Pharisaical righteousness

Reliance on my works exhibits a reliance on the flesh

Contra the NPP reinterpretation of Paul

Affirms the centrality of Christ

In knowing Him

In being in Him

In having His righteousness by faith

In experiencing His death and resurrection

In expecting the resurrection from the dead

Conclusion What does this mean for us?

- Paul viewed his own Law righteousness as damning him.
- One may be saved while not understanding imputed righteousness as long as the person is believing, trusting and bowing to Christ.
- One cannot knowingly deny imputed righteousness and still affirm the gospel.
- We are never accepted by God based on our own works, righteousness or merit. Never - not now, not in the future.

Philippians 3:2-11