

The Doctrine of Justification 10. Its Results

by A.W. Pink

A.W. Pink's sermon emphasizes the absolute and unchangeable nature of justification through faith in Christ, highlighting its profound implications for believers' lives.

Scripture: Romans 8:33

Topics: "Assurance of Salvation", "Justification"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the absolute and final nature of justification for believers, asserting that it is God who justifies and that this justification is irrevocable. He explains that believers are not only forgiven but also glorified, with their sins paid for by Christ, ensuring no condemnation remains. Pink contrasts the true Gospel of justification by faith with the conditional pardon proposed by Arminians, affirming that true justification leads to a transformed life empowered by the Holy Spirit. He concludes that justification is complete upon faith in Christ, with no degrees, and that all believers share in this glorious standing before God.

Transcript

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

10. ITS RESULTS

The justification of the believer is absolute, complete, final. "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33), and "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it" (Eccl. 3:14). So absolute and inexorable is this blessed fact that, in Romans 8:30 we are told, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified": notice it is not simply a promise that God "will glorify," but so sure and certain is that blissful event, the past tense is used.

"Them He also glorified" is speaking from the standpoint of the eternal and unalterable purpose of God, concerning which there is no conditionality or contingency whatsoever. To be "glorified" is to be perfectly conformed to the lovely image of Christ, when we shall see Him as He is and be made like Him (1 John 3:2). Because God has determined this, He speaks of it as already accomplished, for He "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). So far as the believer is concerned, the penal side of the sin question has been settled once and for all.

His case has been tried in the supreme court, and God has justified him: in consequence thereof the Divine decision is "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Once those very persons were under condemnation--"condemned already" (John 3:18); but now that their faith has united them to Christ there is no condemnation. The debt of their sin has been paid by their great Surety; the record thereof has been "blotted out" by His cleansing blood.

"It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth" (Rom. 8:33, 34). Who will reverse His decision! Where is that superior tribunal to which this cause can be carried? Eternal justice has pronounced her fiat; immutable judgment has recorded her sentence. It is utterly and absolutely impossible that the sentence of the Divine Judge should ever be revoked or reversed. His sentence of justification results from and rests upon a complete satisfaction having been offered to His Law, and that in the fulfillment of a covenant engagement.

Thus is effectually precluded the recall of the verdict. The Father stipulated to release His elect from the curse of the law provided the Son would meet the claims of justice against them. The Son freely complied with His Father's will: "Lo, I come." He was now made under the law, fulfilled the law, and suffered the full penalty of the law; therefore shall He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Sooner shall the lightnings of omnipotence shiver the Rock of Ages than those sheltering in Him again be brought under condemnation.

How very, very far from the glorious truth of the Gospel is the mere conditional pardon which Arminians represent God as bestowing upon those who come to Christ--a pardon which may be rescinded, yea, which will be canceled, unless they "do their part" and perform certain stipulations! What a horrible and blasphemous travesty of the Truth is that!--an error which must be steadfastly resisted no matter who holds it: better far to hurt the feelings of a million of our fellow-creatures than to displease their august Creator.

On no such precarious basis as our fulfilling certain conditions has God suspended the justification of His people. Not only is there "now no condemnation" resting upon the believer, but there never again shall be, for "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:8). The dread sentence of the law, "Thou shalt surely die," cannot in justice be executed upon the sinner's Surety and also upon himself. Hence by a necessity existing in the very nature of moral government, it must follow that the believing sinner be freed from all condemnation, that is, so cleared of the same that he is raised above all liability to punishment.

So declared our blessed Saviour Himself, in words too plain and emphatic to admit of any misunderstanding: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). He, the habitation of whose throne is "justice and judgment," has sealed up this declaration forever, by affirming "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Sooner shall the sword of justice cleave the helmet of the Almighty than any Divinely pardoned soul perish.

But not only are the sins of all who truly come to Christ eternally remitted, but the very righteousness of the Redeemer passes over to them, is placed upon them, so that a perfect obedience to the law is imputed to their account. It is theirs, not by promise, but by gift (Rom. 5:17), by actual bestowment. It is not simply that God treats them as if they were righteous, they are righteous and so pronounced by Him. And therefore may each believing soul exclaim, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my

God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. 61:10).

O that each Christian reader may be enabled to clearly and strongly grasp hold of this glorious fact: that he is now truly righteous in the sight of God, is in actual possession of an obedience which answers every demand of the law. This unspeakable blessing is bestowed not only by the amazing grace of God, but it is actually required by His inexorable justice. This too was stipulated and agreed upon in the covenant into which the Father entered with the Son. That is why the Redeemer lived here on earth for upwards of thirty years before He went to the cross to suffer the penalty of our sins: He assumed and discharged our responsibilities; as a child, as a youth, as a man, He rendered unto God that perfect obedience which we owed Him.

He "fulfilled all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15) for His people, and just as He who knew no sin was made sin for them, so they are now made "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). And therefore does Jehovah declare, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. 54:10). By actually believing with a justifying faith the sinner doth receive Christ Himself, is joined to Him, and becomes immediately an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.

This gives him a right unto and an interest in the benefits of His mediation. By faith in Christ he received not only the forgiveness of sins, but an inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts 26:18), the Holy Spirit (given to him) being "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13, 14). The believing sinner may now say "in the LORD have I righteousness" (Isa. 45:24). He is "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10), for by "one offering" the Saviour hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

The believer has been "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6), and stands before the throne of God arrayed in a garment more excellent than that which is worn by the holy angels. How infinitely does the glorious Gospel of God transcend the impoverished thoughts and schemes of men! How immeasurably superior is that "everlasting righteousness" which Christ has brought in (Dan. 9:24) from that miserable thing which multitudes are seeking to produce by their own efforts. Greater far is the difference between the shining light of the midday sun and the blackness of the darkest night, than between that "best robe" (Luke 15:22) which Christ has wrought out for each of His people and that wretched covering which zealous religionists are attempting to weave out of the filthy rags of their own righteousness.

Equally great is the difference between the truth of God concerning the present and immutable standing of His saints in all the acceptability of Christ, and the horrible perversion of Arminians who make acceptance with God contingent upon the believer's faithfulness and perseverance, who suppose that Heaven can be purchased by the creature's deeds and doings. It is not that the justified soul is now left to himself, so that he is certain of getting to Heaven no matter how he conducts himself--the fatal error of Antinomians.

No Indeed. God also imparts to him the blessed Holy Spirit, who works within him the desire to serve, please, and glorify the One who has been so gracious to Him. "The love of Christ constraineth us... that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). They now "delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22), and though the flesh, the world, and the Devil oppose every step of the way, occasioning many a sad fall--which is repented of, confessed, and forsaken--nevertheless the Spirit renews them day by day (2

Cor. 4:16) and leads them in the paths of righteousness for Christ's name's sake.

In the last paragraph will be found the answer to those who object that the preaching of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith alone, will encourage carelessness and foster licentiousness. Those whom God justifies are not left in their natural condition, under the dominion of sin, but are quickened, indwelt, and guided by the Holy Spirit. As Christ cannot be divided, and so is received as Lord to rule us as well as Saviour to redeem us, so those whom God justifies He also sanctifies.

We do not affirm that all who receive this blessed truth into their heads have their lives transformed thereby--no indeed; but we do insist that where it is applied in power to the heart there always follows a walk to the glory of God, the fruits of righteousness being brought forth to the praise of His name. Each truly justified soul will say: "Let worldly minds the world pursue, It has no charms for me; I once admired its trifles too, But grace has set me free." It is therefore the bounden duty of those who profess to have been justified by God to diligently and impartially examine themselves, to ascertain whether or not they have in them those spiritual graces which always accompany justification.

It is by our sanctification, and that alone, that we may discover our justification. Would you know whether Christ fulfilled the law for you, that His obedience has been imputed to your account? Then search your heart and life and see whether a spirit of obedience to Him is daily working in you. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled only in those who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4). God never designed that the obedience of His Son should be imputed to those who live a life of worldliness, self-pleasing, and gratifying the lusts of the flesh.

Far from it: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Summarizing now the blessed results of justification. The sins of the believer are forgiven. "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:38, 39). All the sins of the believer, past, present, and to come, were laid upon Christ and atoned for by Him. Although sins cannot be actually pardoned before they are actually committed yet their obligation to the curse of the law were virtually remitted at the Cross, antecedently to their actual commission.

The sins of Christians involve only the governmental dealings of God in this life, and these are remitted upon a sincere repentance and confession. An inalienable title unto everlasting glory is bestowed. Christ purchased for His people the reward of blessing of the law, which is eternal life. Therefore does the Holy Spirit assure the Christian that he has been begotten "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

Not only is that inheritance reserved for all the justified, but they are all preserved unto it, as the very next verse declares, "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (v. 5)--"kept" from committing the unpardonable sin, from apostatising from the truth, from being fatally deceived by the Devil; so "kept" that the power of God prevents anything separating them from His love in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:35-38). Reconciliation unto God Himself.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:1, 10). Until men are justified they are at war with God, and He is against them, being "angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11). Dreadful beyond words is the condition of those who are under condemnation: their minds are enmity against God (Rom. 8:7), all their ways are opposed to Him (Col. 1:21). But at conversion the sinner throws down the weapons of his

rebellion and surrenders to the righteous claims of Christ, and by Him he is reconciled to God.

Reconciliation is to make an end of strife, to bring together those at variance, to change enemies into friends. Between God and the justified there is peace--effected by the blood of Christ. An unalterable standing in the favour of God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:1, 2). Mark the word "also": not only has Christ turned away the wrath of God from us, but in addition He has secured the benevolence of God toward us.

Previous to justification our standing was one of unutterable disgrace, but now, through Christ, it is in one of unclouded grace. God now has naught but good-will toward us. God has not only ceased to be offended at us, but is well-pleased with us; not only will He never afflict punishment upon us, but He will never cease to shower His blessings upon us. The throne to which we have free access is not one of judgment, but of pure and unchanging grace. Owned by God Himself before an assembled universe.

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matt. 12:36, 37): yes, justified publicly by the Judge Himself! "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). Here will be the final justification of the Christian, this sentence being declaratory unto the glory of God and the everlasting blessedness of those who have believed.

Let it be said in conclusion that the justification of the Christian is complete the moment he truly believes in Christ, and hence there are no degrees in justification. The Apostle Paul was as truly a justified man at the hour of his conversion as he was at the close of his life. The feeblest babe in Christ is just as completely justified as is the most mature saint. Let theologians note the following distinctions. Christians were decretively justified from all eternity: efficaciously so when Christ rose again from the dead; actually so when they believed; sensibly so when the Spirit bestows joyous assurance; manifestly so when they tread the path of obedience; finally so at the Day of Judgment, when God shall sententiously, and in the presence of all created things, pronounce them so.

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