

# The Faith That Justifies

by Barton W. Johnson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in justification, explaining that faith is necessary to please God and that believing the right thing and in the right way is essential for salvation.*

**Scripture:** Mark 16:16, John 3:18, Acts 16:31, Romans 5:1, Romans 10:10, Hebrews 11:6, James 2:19, 1 John 5:4

**Topics:** "Justification By Faith", "Salvation Through Christ"

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## Description

Barton W. Johnson preaches on the foundational truth of justification by faith, emphasizing that it is through faith that we are declared righteous before God, contrasting it with the erroneous belief of justification through works. He highlights the crucial role of faith in salvation, stating that without faith, it is impossible to please God and that unbelief leads to condemnation. Johnson addresses objections to this principle, explaining that beliefs shape our lives and determine our eternal destiny, illustrating that true faith in Jesus Christ leads to a transformed life and peace with God.

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## Transcript

TEXT.--"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."--Rom. 5:1.

I. Paul affirms in this verse that we are justified by faith. No doctrine is more strongly emphasized in the Scriptures. I refer to John 11:24; 20:31; Acts 10:43, as samples of the corroborative passages. They teach us that the believer shall never die; shall have life, shall receive remission of sins. Luther was right when he affirmed the Bible doctrine of justification by faith. Rome was, and is wrong in teaching justification by works of penance and our own righteousness.

II. Not only is it true that faith justifies, but it is also true that there is no justification without faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "He that believeth not shall be damned." Unbelief is spoken of as a fatal and crowning sin. This, then is the principle on which salvation turns. The believer is justified, has life, is a child of God, an heir of heaven; the unbeliever is damned, abides in death, is on the broad road to eternal destruction.

III. "But," objects an unbeliever, "that is unreasonable and unjust. A man may be sincere in his unbelief and why, therefore, should he be condemned?"

I reply, that this is not unreasonable, or unjust, nor is a single principle of the Bible, when understood. The fault is in man's weak reason, not in the principles of eternal truth. I wish the objector to note,

(1) Every unbeliever is a believer of something else. A man believes Jesus to be the Christ, and divine, or he [320] believes him to be a human being just like ourselves. He believes the Bible to be a divine book, or to be of human origin. We call the Mohammedan an unbeliever; he calls us "Infidel dogs."

2. Not only true that he who refuses to believe in Christ is a believer of something else, but true also that our beliefs shape our lives. They are the principles that mould our character; the seeds from whence the fruits of life are sprung. Thus one man's belief makes him a Spiritualistic Freeloader; another's belief develops him into a Mormon Danite, or a Turk with his harem. Another believes in Christ and this belief moulds a pure, beneficent, Christlike life. To suspend our justification or condemnation on our belief is to suspend it on the very principle that determines the life. God knows what kind of a life the belief in the heart will develop, and hence justifies or condemns men, as the farmer approves or condemns two little plants growing side by side; one he nourishes for he knows it will bear golden corn; the other he roots up because, after some months it will be a frightful weed.

IV. 1. But says one, "I am a believer, but I have never enjoyed peace with God, though I long waited." Perhaps you have not believed the right thing. What have you believed? Do you answer, "The Truth?" I ask what truth? Not all truth has saving power. It is a truth that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, but that truth wont save. I assure you that you may believe all truths but one and remain unsaved, but may be ignorant of every dogma of theology and the belief of this one truth will save you. The faith that saves is a personal belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Leave dogmas to the Doctors. Salvation is for the unlearned and simple. The plan of salvation is plain enough for the child to understand. "Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

2. But one tells me that he has believed this, and yet [321] has not found peace. The fault is not in God's promises but in yourself. We have found it essential to believe the right thing; it is equally important to believe in the right way. Certainly those Pharisees who believed but did not confess Christ because they preferred to please man rather than God, and the sick woman who pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of his garment, believed in very different ways. The eunuch believed with all his heart, (Acts 8:37). Paul assures us (Romans 10:10) "that with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. The "right way" is to believe with the heart.

3. We illustrate this: A young husband goes to a new country to prepare a home. When all is ready he writes his wife to come. She loves him and trusts him. She obeys. The heavenly bridegroom has gone to a better country to prepare a place for us. He bids us come and tells us the way. If we love and trust him, that is, if we believe with the heart, we obey.

4. Heart-felt faith, the faith that justifies them, demands a full trust in and a loving obedience to Christ. It says, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth, what wilt thou have me to do." It involves the complete surrender of the will and life to Christ. Nor does it make any conditions of surrender, but goes gladly forward in obedience to his commandments. [322]

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