

The Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness Without Works, Asserted and Proved.

by John Gill

The righteousness imputed by God for justification is a perfect righteousness that is imputed to a person through faith in Christ, not through their own efforts or works.

Scripture: Psalm 32:1, Isaiah 45:24, Matthew 5:20, Romans 3:28, Romans 4:6, Romans 5:1, Romans 8:1, 1 Corinthians 6:8, Philippians 3:9, Titus 3:7

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Imputed Righteousness"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the doctrine of imputed righteousness, asserting that justification before God is achieved through faith in Christ's righteousness, not through human works. He illustrates this by referencing Abraham and David, who were justified by faith alone, highlighting that true righteousness is not derived from the law or personal merit but is a gift from God. Gill explains that this imputed righteousness is essential for salvation, freeing believers from condemnation and ensuring their acceptance before God. He concludes by urging the congregation to seek this righteousness in Christ, recognizing the grace involved in its imputation and the dire consequences of lacking it.

Transcript

The

DOCTRINE OF IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

Without Works

Asserted And Proved

The Works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.--PSALM 111:2

Even as David also describeth the Blessedness of the Man unto whom God imputeth Righteousness without Works.--ROMANS 4:6

This Epistle is written on purpose to state, explain, and vindicate, the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. In order to which, the Apostle takes up his two first chapters, and part of the third, in proving, that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin, that they have by

sinning broke the law of God, and so are become liable to its curses and condemnation, and therefore cannot be justified in the sight of God, by their obedience to it; and then strongly and justly concludes, that a man is justified by faith, in the imputed righteousness of Christ, without the deeds of the law.

This doctrine he confirms in the beginning of this chapter, by instances of two of the greatest men, for religion and godliness, that ever were in the Jewish nation. The one is Abraham, who was the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, and yet he was not justified before God by his works; for what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, in verse 3. The other is David, a man after God's own heart, raised up by the Lord to fulfill all his will.

Who yet was so far from trusting to, or depending upon his own righteousness, for justification, that he wholly places the happiness of men, and so unquestionably his own, in a righteousness imputed to him by God, without works, as in the words I have read unto you. In speaking to which, I shall, I. Inquire what that righteousness is, which God imputes to his people for justification. II. What is meant by an imputation of it. III. The manner in which it is imputed to them without works.

IV. The blessedness of those persons, who have it thus imputed to them. I. I Shall inquire what this righteousness is which God imputes to his people for justification; and also endeavor to shew, what it is not, and then what it is. First; What it is not. And 1. It is not man's obedience to a law of works, because this at best is imperfect, and therefore cannot justify. Those persons who have most eagerly pursued after righteousness by the works of the law, and have made the greatest advances towards it this way, yet have fell abundantly short of it, as the people of Israel in general, and in particular the Pharisees, whose righteousness made the greatest pretences to a justifying one, of any people at the time in which they lived, and yet our Lord says of it (Matthew 5:20).

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. If it should be said there men were a parcel of hypocrites, and therefore their righteousness is not to be mentioned, with the righteousness of real and sincere Christians, it is easily replied, in the words of the wise man (Eccl. 7:11). There is not a just man in the earth, who doeth good and sinneth not. The most holy men that ever lived on the earth, have been always ready to acknowledge the imperfections of their obedience and righteousness.

Job, was very early convinced of this, and very ingenuous in his confession of it, when he says (Job 9:30, 31), If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own cloaths shall abhor me. Or, as the words may be rendered, shall cause me to be abhorred; or will discover me to be abominable; that is, my garments of righteousness which I have took so much pains with to work out, make and keep clean, will be so far from rendering me grateful, in the sight of my Judge, that they will rather discover the abominable filthiness of my nature, and so make me the object of his abhorrence.

It is upon this account, and with the same view, that David desired (Ps. 143:2). That God would not enter into judgement with him, because that in his sight, no flesh living could be justified; that is, by their own righteousness. And so the Church in Isaiah's time (Chap. 64:6) acknowledges, that all her Righteousness were as filthy rags, and therefore could not be justifying. Besides this can never be the righteousness intended in my text. Because this is a righteousness of works.

Whereas the righteousness God is here said to impute, is a righteousness without works. Moreover man's obedience to the law of works is his own righteousness. Whereas the righteousness here mentioned must

be another's, because it is an imputed one. A man's own righteousness, inherent in him, needs no imputation of it to him. Add to this, that the blessedness of a man, does not consist in, or result from, his own righteousness; for salvation, which is the whole of a man's happiness, as to spiritual things, is not by works of righteousness done by men, but springs from, and is brought about, by the grace, mercy, and love of God through Christ; for if man's happiness consisted in, or was procured by his own righteousness, the grace, mercy, and love of God in man's salvation, would be greatly obscured and lessened, his wisdom, in the tuition of his Son, would be liable to be impeached and arraigned, his mission would appear needless, as well as his death, as the Apostle (Gal. 2:21), argues, if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Which argument deserves special notice. 2. This righteousness is not man's obedience to the gospel as a new and milder law. The scheme of some persons, if I apprehend it right, is this, that Christ came into this world, to relax the old law of works, and to mitigate and abate the severities of it, and to introduce a new law, a gospel law, a law of milder terms, a remedial law, the terms and conditions of which, are faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, which though imperfect, is through Christ and for his sake accepted of, in the room of a perfect righteousness.

The whole of which scheme is entirely false. For, in the first place, Christ came not into the world, either to destroy, or relax the law of God, but to fulfill it, which he did completely, by his active and passive obedience to it. He fulfilled every jot and tittle of the perceptive part of the law, which required a holy nature and perfect obedience, both which were found in him. He bore the whole penalty of the law, in the room and stead of his people, all its exactions, requirements and demands were answered by him; all its severities were executed on him; he was not spared or abated any thing, and hereby he magnified the law, and made it honorable.

He indeed freed his people from the curse and condemnation of it; but has not either abolished or relaxed it, but keeps it in his own hands as a rule of life and conversation to them, and has left it in its full mandatory, cursing and damning power over others without the least mitigation, relaxation, or infringement of it. Moreover the gospel is no new law, it is no law at all, there is nothing in it that looks like a law, it is called (Acts 20:24), The gospel of the grace of God; because it is a discovery of the exceeding riches of God's grace in his kindness to lost man, through Jesus Christ It is called the gospel of our salvation, because it reveals the Savior, it gives an account of his person, office, and grace, and of the great salvation he has wrought out; and points out the persons who shall share in it, and be everlasting possessors of it, as the word euggelion itself translated, gospel, signifies good news, or glad tidings.

Now what is there either in the name, or thing, that looks like a law. The gospel is no other than a pure promise, a free declaration of peace and pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation to poor sinners by Jesus Christ. The sum and substance of it is, that this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). Again; faith and repentance are not the conditions of the new covenant, or terms of any new law, as duties incumbent on us, they belong to the moral law, or law of works, which obliges us to obedience to every thing God does or shall reveal as his will.

As graces bestowed upon us by God, they are parts, they are blessings of the new covenant of grace, and not conditions of it. Besides, if they were terms or conditions of this new law, or gospel law talked of, which indeed is a contradiction in terms, they would not be more easy than the terms of the law of works were to Adam in innocence. Nay it was much more easy for Adam to have kept the whole law of works, than it is

for any of his fallen posterity to repent and believe of themselves.

And how does this appear to be a remedial law, or a law of milder terms, as it is called. Once more, it is not consistent either with the truth or justice of God, to accept, of an imperfect righteousness, though ever so sincere, in the room of a perfect one. It is not consistent with his truth. He whose judgement is according to truth, can never account that a perfect righteousness, which is imperfect. It is not consistent with his justice, he who is the judge of all the earth will do right, and therefore he will by no means clear the guilty, without a full satisfaction to, and a reparation of his broken law.

This is the true reason why he set forth Christ to be the propitiation for sin. Namely, that he might appear to be just whilst he was the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Whereas, was he to justify persons upon the foot of an imperfect Righteousness, he would neither appear just to himself, or to his law, which requires a perfect and complete obedience. 3. This righteousness is not a man's profession of religion, or his submission to the ordinances of the gospel, for men may draw near to God with their mouths, and honor him with their lips, and yet their hearts be removed far from him, and their fear of him be only taught by the precepts of men; they may seek the Lord daily, and seemingly delight to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they may ask of him the ordinances of justice, and in an outward shew take delight in approaching to him; they may appear to be outwardly righteous before men, and yet be inwardly full of all manner of impurity.

May have a name to live and yet be dead; they may have the form of godliness, and yet deny the power thereof; they may submit to the ordinance of baptism, and constantly attend the Lord's supper, and yet be destitute of a justifying righteousness. Yea, even a real and genuine profession of religion, and an hearty submission to gospel ordinances, from right principles to right ends, is not a man's righteousness before God. 4. Neither is sincerity in any religion, no not in the best religion, this righteousness; for it is possible that a man may be sincerely wrong, as well as sincerely right.

There may be a sincere Pagan, or a sincere Papist, or a sincere Mahometan, as well as a sincere Christian. Nay it's possible for a man to be a sincere persecutor of the true religion, as well as a sincere professor of it. The apostle Paul, was sincere in persecuting the gospel, as well as he afterwards was, in preaching that faith he once destroyed. For he thought with himself (Acts 26:9), that he ought, in conscience, for the glory of God, and the advancement of religion, to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

And our Lord tells his disciples (John 16:2), that the time was coming, that whosoever killed them would think that he did God service. So that sincerity is not a man's righteousness before God. And indeed take sincerity as a distinct grace of the Spirit of God, and it belongs to sanctification, and not to justification, though it seems rather to be what runs through every other grace, than to be distinct from them; and is what makes our faith unfeigned, our love without dissimulation, and our hope without hypocrisy. 5.

Nor is the whole real work of grace and sanctification upon the soul its justifying righteousness, for this would be to confound justification and sanctification together; which two blessings of grace, though they meet in one and the same subject, and come out of one and the same hand, yet are they in themselves distinct. Sanctification is a work of grace within us, justification is an act of grace upon us. Sanctification is a gradual and progressive work; it is signified (2 Pet. 3:18), by a growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and it is a work that is but begun, yet is not yet finished, and is carried on by degrees.

Justification is done simul et semel, it is a complete act at once; it is expressed (Col. 2:10), by the saints being complete in Christ, and perfected by his one sacrifice. 6. If the whole work of sanctification, is not our justifying righteousness before God, then certainly the to credere, or act of believing, which is only a part of this work, cannot be it. There are indeed some scriptures in this chapter wherein is my text, which are by some thought to favor this notion, as when it is said in verse 3.

Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and in verse 5, his faith is counted for righteousness; and in verse 9, for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness; in all which places, not the act of faith, but the object of faith is intended, as will appear from this single consideration, namely, that this it, or faith, which was imputed to Abraham, is said to be imputed to others also, as is evident from verses 22, 23, 24, and therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness.

Now if it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it, the very self same it, shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Now, whatever reason persons may think they have to conclude, that Abraham's act of faith was imputed to himself, as his justifying righteousness; yet it cannot with any reason be concluded, that his act of faith should be imputed to others also as such. The plain meaning is, that object, which Abraham's faith respected and was reckoned to him for his righteousness, is also imputed for righteousness to all others who believe in Christ.

Besides, it ought to be observed, that the apostle does not use the preposition anti but eiv; he does not say that faith was imputed anti dikaiosunhv instead of righteousness, but eiv zkaosunhn, unto righteousness, and the meaning of the phrase is the same, with the meaning of the words in Romans 10:10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and is expressive of the great doctrine of justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ. That the to credere, or act of believing, is not the righteousness intended in my text, may appear yet more manifest, from the following considerations. 1st.

Faith as a duty performed, or as a grace exercised by the believer, is his own; hence we read in scripture of my faith, and thy faith, and his faith; the just man is said to live by his faith (Heb. 17:5). And says our Lord to the woman of Canaan, O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt (Matthew 5:28). And says the apostle (Jam. 2:28), shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. But now the righteousness by which a man is justified before God, is not his own, but another's, and therefore imputed to him.

Hence the apostle Paul desired to be found in Christ, not having on, says he, mine own righteousness, which is of the law (Phil. 3:9). Whereas if faith had been his righteousness, he should have desired to have on his own righteousness, and not another's. 2d. Faith as such is a work of the law, as it is the gift of God, and a grace bestowed upon us; it is a part of the covenant of grace, as has been already observed, but as it is a duty required of us, and performed by us, it belongs to the laws and is done in obedience to it.

It is called the commandment of God. This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 3:23). It is called the work of God (John 6:28, 29), not only because it is wrought in us by God, but also because it is required of us by him; every command and all duty belongs to the law, as every promise and all grace does to the gospel. Now if faith, as an act of ours, is our justifying righteousness, then we are justified by a work of the law, whereas the scripture says (Rom. 3:20): By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. 3d.

Faith is imperfect in the best of saints; our Lord frequently called his own disciples, men of little faith; and so conscious were they themselves of the imperfection of it, that they prayed to him, saying (Luke 17:5), Lord increase our faith. There are ta userhmata thv pisewv, some deficiencies, something lacking, in the faith of the best of God's people. Every one has reason to say, more or less, as the poor man in the gospel did (Mark 9:24), Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

And for this reason faith cannot be our justifying righteousness, for that ought to be perfect. Besides, was it perfect, it is but a part of the law. It is indeed one of the weightier matters of the law, as in (Matthew 23:23), but then it is not the whole of the law. Now the scripture says (Gal. 3:10), Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them. And God whose judgement is according to truth, cannot reckon that a perfect conformity to the law, which is only a partial one. 4th.

Faith is manifestly distinguished from righteousness (Rom. 10:10), when a man is said to believe unto righteousness, when the righteousness of God is said to be revealed from faith to faith, and when it is said to be through the faith of Christ, and is called the righteousness of God by faith. Now then, if faith and righteousness are two different things, then faith is not our justifying righteousness, and so not the righteousness mentioned in my text. 5th. Something else is represented, as the righteousness by which a sinner is justified before God.

The people of God, are said to be justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and some times by the blood of Christ, and at other times by the one man's obedience (Rom. 2:24; 6:9-19). Now, faith is not the redemption in Christ Jesus, nor is it the blood of Christ, nor is it his obedience either active or passive, and therefore is not that which is imputed for justification. Nevertheless, faith must be allowed to have a very great concern in the business of justification.

Hence we are said to be justified by faith (Rom. 5:1), not by faith either as a work performed by us, or as a grace wrought in us, but we are justified by it relatively or objectively, as it respects, apprehends, and lays hold on Christ and his righteousness for justification; or we are justified by it organically, as it is a recipient of this blessing, for faith is the hand which receives the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation. Faith is that grace to which this righteousness is revealed, and by which the soul first spies it.

When beholding its glory, sufficiency and suitableness, it approves of it, and renounces its own righteousness. It is that grace by which a soul puts on Christ's righteousness as its garment, and rejoices therein, by which all boasting in a man's own works is excluded, and by which all the glory of justification is given to Christ. But I proceed, Secondly, To shew, what is this righteousness intended in my text, which God imputes unto his people, and that is, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By which I mean not his essential righteousness as God, as Osiander dreamed. For though he who is our Righteousness is Jehovah (Jer. 23:6), yet that righteousness of his by which he is Jehovah, is not our justifying righteousness but that which results from his active and passive obedience as Mediator (Rom. 5:1). For by one man's obedience many are made righteous, or is, that righteousness of Christ, which consists of the holiness of his nature, the conformity of his life and actions to the law of God, and his sustaining the whole penalty of that law, in the room and stead of his people.

In the commendation of which righteousness, many things might be said; let these few following suffice at present. 1. It is a law honoring, and a justice satisfying righteousness, and therefore God is well pleased

with it (Rom. 5:9); is well pleased for his righteousness sake, because he hath magnified the law and made it honorable. The law is made more honorable by Christ's obedience to it, than it is by the obedience of all the angels in heaven, or than it could be by all God's people on earth, supposing their obedience was never so perfect.

The reason is because of the greatness of his person, he being God as well as man, who obeyed and wrought out a righteousness, which is also such an one, as justice can find no fault with, but is entirely satisfied with, and in which God's people appear even in the eye of justice, unblameable, and irreproveable. 2. It is perfect and complete, and acquits from all sin and condemnation, those who are interested in it, are perfectly comely through the comeliness which is put upon them; they are complete in Christ, the head of all principality and power; they are justified by this righteousness, from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses; they are freed from all guilt of sin, are not under obligation to punishment, and shall not enter into condemnation; their sins are now covered and hid from the eye of divine justice, and when they are sought for hereafter shall not be found. 3.

It is the righteousness of God, and so serves for many; if it had been only by the righteousness of a creature, it could have been of no use and service, but to the creature who was the author of it; but it being the righteousness of God, it is to all and upon all that believe; many are made righteous by it, even all the elect of God and seed of Christ. For in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory. It is a garment down to the foot, and covers every member, even the meanest and lowest in Christ's mystical body. 4.

It is an everlasting righteousness. Our righteousness is both imperfect and of a short continuance. Like Ephraim's goodness, it is as the morning cloud and the early dew. But Christ's righteousness will abide for ever, it is a garment that will never wear out, or wax old, it is a righteousness that will last our lives, be of service at death, appear fresh at judgement, and will answer for us in a time to come, and give us an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. 5.

It is a better righteousness than Adam had in innocence, or the angels now have in heaven. Adam's righteousness was the righteousness of a creature, but this the righteousness of God. That was loseable and was actually lost (Eccl. 7:9), for God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions, in seeking which he lost his righteousness; but Christ's righteousness can never be lost, it abides for ever. The same may be said of the righteousness of Angels, which at best is but a creature righteousness, and might be lost, as it was by a large number of them, and might have been by the rest, had it not been for confirming grace from Christ.

Christ's righteousness may well be called (Luke 15:22), the best robe, for it is such an one as Adam never had to his back in innocence, or the angels now have in glory. But I go on, II. To inquire what is meant by the imputation of this righteousness; which is the way in which it becomes ours and indeed is the only way in which it can become ours. The Hebrew word *חָשַׁב*; in Genesis 15:6 and the Greek word *λογίζωμαι* used by the apostle here, signifies to estimate, reckon, impute, or place something to the account of another.

So the righteousness of Christ is estimated, reckoned, and imputed to be his people's, and is placed to their account as such by God the Father, and looked upon as much by him as their justifying righteousness or as though it had been wrought by them, in their own persons. That this righteousness becomes ours this way, is manifest. For in the same way that Adam's sin became ours, the same way the

righteousness of Christ becomes ours; or the same way we are made sinners by the disobedience of Adam, are we made righteous by the obedience of Christ (Rom. 5:19).

For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. Now Adam's sin became ours, or we were made sinners, through his sin; by imputation, it was reckoned, it was placed to the account of all his posterity. So Christ's righteousness becomes ours, or we are made righteous, through that righteousness of his; by the imputation of it to us, it is reckoned, it is placed to our account. Again, the same way our sins became Christ's, Christ's righteousness becomes ours, as appears from 1 Corinthians 5:21.

He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Now the way in which Christ was made sin for us, was by imputation; he never had any sin inherent in him, though he had it transferred unto him and laid upon him. So the way in which we are made the righteousness of God, must be by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and indeed we cannot be made righteous any other way, than by imputation. For the objects of justification are ungodly persons in themselves; for God justifies the ungodly, as in the verse preceding my text.

Now if they are ungodly in themselves, then they are not justified by a righteousness of their own, it must be by the righteousness of another. And if they are justified by the righteousness of another, that other's righteousness must be some way or other made theirs, it must be placed to their account, and reckoned as their own, which is only done by an imputation of it to them. But, III. I shall now consider the manner in which this righteousness is thus imputed, and that is, without works.

That this righteousness is imputed without works, is manifest from the character the persons bear, whom God justifies, which is that of ungodly ones, as has been just now observed. If they are ungodly, they are without works; good works, or works of righteousness. If God therefore will justify such, as he certainly does, he must justify them by imputing a righteousness to them, without any consideration of works done by them. And, indeed, if God did not impute righteousness for justification in this manner, justification would not be an act of free grace, as it is always represented to be.

We may argue about justification, as the Apostle does about election, when he says (Rom.11:6), and if of grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work. We are said (Titus 3:7), to be justified, not only by the grace of God, but freely by his grace, to express the abundance and freeness of divine grace, in the free gift of righteousness unto justification of life. Besides, if righteousness was not imputed without works, boasting would not be excluded, as it is in God's way of justifying sinners, by Christ's righteousness, without any consideration of them.

And, indeed, works are not causes of any sort in the affair of justification, they are not the moving cause of it. For that is the free grace of God; nor are they the material cause of it, for that is the obedience and righteousness of Christ. Nor are they the instrumental cause, for that is faith, nor are they the *causa a sine qua non*, or causes without which persons are justified, who never performed good works. And indeed those that are justified, are justified, if not without the presence of them, yet without the efficiency of them, or any consideration of them as having any casual influence on justification; for with reference hereunto, they are not to be admitted into the lowest class or range of causes.

It may perhaps be said, how then can the Apostles, Paul and James, be reconciled in this matter, seeing the one positively affirms (Rom. 3:28), that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law; and the

other (Jam. 2:21, 24, 25), as positively asserts that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. To which I answer, there are two things, which when observed, will rectify and quickly remove the seeming difficulty, and reconcile the Apostles to each other, which are, 1.

They speak of two different things. The Apostle Paul speaks of the justification of a man's person before God, and this he truly asserts to be, by a righteousness imputed without works. The Apostle James speaks of a justification of a man's faith, or of his cause before men, which he also truly asserts to be by works, for wisdom is justified of her children (Matthew 11:19). True and undefiled religion is discovered and bore witness to by good works. Faith is shewn forth, made known, and evidentially perfected by them; in justification by imputed righteousness, a man has not whereof to boast before God.

In justification of a man's cause by works, a man has whereof to boast before men, and in some cases with a becoming modesty may say with Samuel (1 Sam. 12:3): Whose ox have I taken? whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? 2. They speak to two different sort of persons. The apostle Paul had to do with self Justiciaries, who fought for righteousness not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, who being ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness, and so submitted not to the righteousness of Christ.

The apostle James had to do with a set of men called Gnostics, who boasted of their knowledge, from whence they took their name. These were the Libertines and Antinomians of that day, who trusting to their speculative notions and historical faith, despised the law, and disregarded and neglected the performance of good works, accounting their knowledge sufficient unto salvation. And this also occasioned those different modes of expression in these Apostles, who otherwise were agreed in the same truths.

I go on, IV. To consider the blessedness of those persons who have this righteousness imputed to them. 1. They are freed from all sin and condemnation, not from the being of sin, but from the guilt of it, and all obligation to punishment (Rom. 8:1). For there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, to them who are made the righteousness of God, in him, they may say as the apostle did (Rom. 8:33, 34), Who shall say any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies, who shall condemn; it is Christ that died.

And therefore they must be happy persons, for blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, with which words David (Ps. 32:1), describeth the blessedness of the persons interested in this righteousness -- 2. Their persons and services are both acceptable to God, he is well pleased with both, for Christ's righteousness sake. Christ's garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia, with which his people being clad, the Lord smells a sweet smell in them, as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed; their persons come up with acceptance before him, and their sacrifices both of prayer and praise are grateful to him, through the person, blood, righteousness and mediation of Christ's righteousness which is imputed to them, shall never be taken away from them, is one of those blessings he will never reverse, and one of those gifts of his which are without repentance. -- 3.

It shall go well with these persons in life, at death, and at judgment (Isa. 3:10), Say ye to the Righteous it shall go well with him. It shall go well with him in life, for all things work together for his good. It shall go well with him at death. For the righteous hath hope in his death, founded upon this righteousness imputed to him. It shall go well with him at judgment, for this righteousness will answer for him at that time, and bring him off clear at God's bars and introduce him into his kingdom and glory.-- 4.

Such persons are heirs of glory, and shall everlastingly enjoy it, for being justified by grace, they are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Justification and glorification are closely connected together. For whom God justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:30). Justified persons may comfortably argue, from their justification, to their glorification, and strongly conclude with the apostle (Rom. 5:9). That if they are justified by the blood of Christ, they shall be saved from wrath through him.

I shall add no more, but some short improvement of what has been said, and 1. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, for without a righteousness there will be no admittance into heaven, and such an one it must be, as is commensurate to all the demands of God's righteous law, for no other will be satisfactory to divine justice. -- 2. Go to Christ for such an one, in whom only it is to be had, who is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes (Rom.10:4), it may be had in him, it cannot be had in any other.

For surely, or only, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength (Isa. 45:24). 3. Admire the grace of God, in imputing this righteousness to you, and rejoice therein; it is grace in Christ: to procure, and grace in the Father to impute it, and grace in the Spirit to apply it. Admire the grace of each person herein, and ascribe the glory of your justification to it. 4. Miserable will those persons be, who will be found at the last day without this righteousness, for such shall not inherit the kingdom of God, they will not be admitted into the wedding chamber, not having on the wedding garment, but orders will be given to bind them hand and feet, and cast them into outer darkness, where will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Source:

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