

Justification and Righteousness

by John Nelson Darby

Our justification is according to God's righteousness, and alone can be our basis for justification, leading to a new relationship founded on God's glory.

Scripture: Romans 1:16

Topics: "Righteousness", "Justification"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the profound relationship between justification and righteousness in his sermon, highlighting that the righteousness of God is revealed through Christ, who fulfills the requirements of divine justice. He explains that justification is not merely a legal declaration but a transformation of our state, where we are cleared of guilt through Christ's sacrifice. Darby asserts that true righteousness is imputed to believers, allowing them to stand before God without charge, as they are now seen as having fulfilled all relationships through Christ's obedience. He further elaborates that this righteousness is rooted in God's glory, which Christ has perfectly manifested, thus bringing believers into a new position of acceptance with God. The sermon culminates in the understanding that through Christ's resurrection, believers are made the righteousness of God, reflecting His divine nature and holiness.

Transcript

The character of Romans 1 comes out more distinctly than ever to me. First, the Person of Christ as the primary subject of the gospel, promise, fulfilment and power - this last according to the Spirit of holiness, the witness of the divine nature, that is, morally. Then the righteousness of God is revealed in it. This is the general introduction but the reason for this last is in what follows, which I now note: God's wrath from heaven is revealed. Not as often remarked governmental wrath on earth but what comes from His nature and will as impelled by evil as contrary to that nature, hence all unrighteous. God's nature coming out against all that was contrary to itself. This gives a most spiritual and important character to Christianity. It is the full light and the absolute question between God and evil found in itself, God's righteousness coming in, as the only answer to it.

Further righteousness through God's righteousness is the basis of our justification, and alone can be now, our justification is according to it, is more than justification and other than it. To be justified supposes responsibility and a change in my state called in question (it may be my pretensions). Man is in question with God, really a sinner (for as formed of God nothing could be questioned by God), he is justified, that is, cleared from all charge according to the principle by which his state is judged, the righteous exigence of

God toward him. He is cleared by the propitiation of Christ through faith in His blood. The value of that blood makes him clear from all guilt in God's sight. God imputes no sin to him and in this sense imputes righteousness thus accounted to meet the exigency of what God requires - of what His judgment requires. His judgment has nothing to say against him but has to say I am met and satisfied. In the person, justification fully recognized and righteousness are the same. Righteousness in this sense - righteousness imputed is consistency with the relationships in which we stand. Now we had natural relationships and failed in them and Christ's precious blood justifies us, meets our failure in them. We are looked (at) as not having failed in any relationship through His obedience. Hence though justified from, refers to charge and failure, yet it also amounts to righteousness because we are now held not to have failed in our relationships. But there is more. When really looked into there was no relationship remaining. Sin and banishment from Eden had broken all. The law supposed there was (yet even here founded on an external redemption) yet, as law, too, the ground of these relationships, and gave the rule of them and helping in their maintenance but did not go beyond helping in the life in which the relationship subsisted. But God's righteousness goes further.

156 Our relationship is founded on a new work - a work in which God has been glorified and man set in a new position of acceptance according to God's own presence and eternal righteousness. Man's righteousness is according to this relationship now. He is made the righteousness of God in Christ. In a general way he is accounted righteous. God has nothing against him, only that justified, supposes change and the question is raised in Romans 8:33. Righteous is a present state without charge - consistency with what God requires in the place we are in. But that and justified are the same; when we look into the real state of the case we find righteousness to be according to the full revelation of the divine character which Christ has as glorified - made good in every way even unto death on the cross so as to bring us into God's presence as His children (not Adam's) according to the perfectness of that - the fullest revelation of God's character (the cross), what angels desire to look into, and which has set Christ as man at His Father's right hand. He is our righteousness God is revealed, wrath from heaven is revealed against all not consistent with His presence as so revealed, hence it is said, sinned and come short of the glory of God.

157 Note in Romans 3, God, though setting forth the propitiatory work in grace, is a judge to whom propitiation is offered by blood. In Romans 4 He is a Saviour active in power; He has raised up Christ from the dead after He had been delivered for our offences; His the blood on the door posts, and the Red Sea.

I am confirmed in the conviction that Romans 8:1 is the general resulting statement and stands by itself, that the *gar* (for) of v. 2 is not illative but the common *gar* (for) of bringing from farther off, a principle on which the result in his mind stands, as is in another way verse 3 which underlays the basis of the whole matter, and meeting in the Christian way the legalists' objection.

Man's probation history ended in the cross. He must meet the glory of God as revealed or cannot meet Him at all, but all have sinned and come short of that glory, and would be in themselves punished with everlasting destruction from the glory of His power. But then Christ has perfectly glorified God, John 13 and 17, and is entered as Man into God's glory - redemption is complete and according to it, yea wrought out in it, and so man is in the glory and like Christ there. He has borne our sins and so justified us from all things the old man has done, glorifying God in it. But then, what God is, has been glorified in it and righteousness now involves glory, because it is according to glory and this is more than justifying. The new fact of justifying and accounting righteous is the same but as I have said, the question on justifying being raised, but righteousness now is according to the glory of God, is a righteousness according to that glory. God's consistency with Himself proved by setting Christ at His right hand (John 16), proved as regards

offences and justifying by resurrection, further than which on this point therefore Romans does not go, but going on as a result with the glory into which He is entered. This bringing all into the presence of God without a veil, in contrast with governmental wrath as the Assyrian and Babylon, etc., and sin being measured and all wrath, by the glory of God which can bear no ungodliness in His presence, is of the utmost importance. But Christ has glorified God. It is not merely that we are in the presence of the glory, and judgment of good and evil is according to the glory but He has glorified so that, sovereign grace as regards us, yet in righteousness is for us, our glory is a part of that righteousness as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Hence we are said to be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our being in that state is a part of that righteousness.

158 Hence also it is said as to the abstract principle of it in the Person of Christ, that He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. Power raised Him but it was not simply power, that will raise the wicked, but will not declare them in any sense sons of God, but this is according to the Spirit of holiness, according to the nature and character of God, glorified in all Christ's ways and sealed and marked out in resurrection, the wholly new estate into which man is brought into the presence of God according to divine holiness; to walk in the light as He is in the light (Comp. Rom. 6:4.) There is the power of Christian life - the resurrection from among the dead declares it but declares it according to the Spirit of holiness - God's divine nature. This is very blessed - a divine place; the other part shows it is in righteousness. After God, he says, in righteousness and true holiness, but then the life or nature in us.

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