

Did Jesus Preach the Gospel of Evangelicalism

by John Piper

This sermon emphasizes the doctrine of justification by faith alone, highlighting the importance of not trusting in our own righteousness but in Christ alone. It delves into the universal need for Christ's righteousness in every culture and the necessity of giving Christ all the glory in salvation for both bearing our sins and providing our righteousness.

Duration: 1:05:15

Scripture: Romans 5:18, Philippians 3:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Luke 18:9, Isaiah 53:11, Romans 6:23, Philippians 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:22

Topics: "Justification by Faith", "Christ's Righteousness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the doctrine of justification by faith alone, highlighting the importance of not trusting in our own righteousness but in Christ alone. It delves into the universal need for Christ's righteousness in every culture and the necessity of giving Christ all the glory in salvation for both bearing our sins and providing our righteousness.

Transcript

Thank you. Let's pray. Hallelujah.

All I have is Christ. Hallelujah. Jesus is my life.

Lord, the potential of 7,000 is incalculable for the nations, for the nation, for the homes, for the churches, for the marriages, for the children. Incalculable. God, don't let it be small.

We're stamping our arrows. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, and on through the night. Stamping our arrows on the ground.

Do exceedingly beyond anything we could dream through this 7,000 who have not bowed the knee. So come and help me to add my part now. In the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' great name, amen.

I would like to change the title, but let me explain why I chose the title and then the new one that I would like to choose. By the way, this manuscript will be up on the Desiring God website in about an hour, so you

don't have to really take notes. You just listen, and that would be the best way to process.

Pray, listen, pray, listen. Did Jesus preach the gospel of evangelicalism isn't intended to be a critique of the gospel of evangelicalism. It's intended to assume that the gospel is biblical and true, and then ask if Jesus preached it.

That was the original intention, and I realized that's not going to sound right. The real title I would choose now is, did Jesus preach Paul's gospel, the gospel of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, based on the blood and righteousness of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone? Did he preach that, or did Paul only preach that? What I'm driven by in this message is something that I've had on my mind and heart ever since graduate school in Germany, namely the conviction that Jesus and Paul preached the same gospel. There's about a 300-year history among critical scholars to the effect that that's not true, and that the gospel or the message that Jesus preached was one thing, and it aborted, and the apostles then put in its place this radical kingdom message that aborted an institution called the church.

So Jesus brought the kingdom, it aborted, and a whole series of alternatives have been suggested of how this happened. So the problem I'm wrestling with in these last, what, 40 years or so, is not whether evangelicalism gets Paul's gospel right, that's a big issue, but whether Paul got Jesus' gospel right. Because I have a sense that among the reasons that some in our day are losing their grip on the gospel is a suspicion that we are, we Reformed types especially, are not only forcing it, the gospel, into doctrinal categories rather than biblical ones, but also we are defaulting to Pauline categories at the expense of Jesus' categories.

And if you feel that way, if you have this subtle suspicion that all this justification talk, for example, is giving short shrift to the real message of Jesus, then you're very likely not going to have a strong confidence in preaching that Pauline gospel, and you're going to tend to change it. So that's the burden that I have. I think, I believe that what I'm doing here is an extension of R.C. Sproul's talk from yesterday, and mine is taking what he said as true, and then giving it an exegetical meditation and greater foundation.

Here's the quote from R.C. Sproul. If you don't have imputation, you don't have sola fide. And if you don't have sola fide, you don't have the gospel, close quote.

And my goal is to argue that Jesus preached the gospel of justification by faith alone, apart from works of the law, understood as imputation of His own righteousness through faith alone. That's what I intend to try to do. Now, let me say a word about method.

This is huge when you're dealing with the gospels. One of my goals in dealing with the Scriptures the way I'm going to is to fire you up for serious, lifelong meditation on the four gospels as they stand. I'm so jealous, especially for seminary students, that you not get sidetracked into peeling away the so-called layers of tradition to find the so-called historical Jesus.

I want you to feel the truth and depth and wonder that awaits a lifelong labor of love in pondering the inexhaustible portraits of Jesus that are given to us by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I spent about 12 years in the heady atmosphere of academia, so three years at Fuller, three years in Germany, six years teaching these things in biblical studies courses. And from those 12 years, I came away with this conviction, which then for the subsequent 30 years in pastoral ministry has been reaffirmed every year stronger and stronger.

And I commend it to you. Here's my summary of my methodological conviction concerning gospel studies. If you interpret faithfully the deeds and the words of Jesus as he is portrayed in the four gospels, Jesus will be historically and theologically more in accord, in your mind, more in accord with who he really was and what he really did than all the varied attempts at portraits of critical scholars who tried to reconstruct the Jesus of history behind the gospels.

Let me say that more simply. Here's the second way to say it. If by means of historical and grammatical effort, accompanied by the spirit's illumination of what is really there, if you understand the accounts of the four gospels as they stand, you will know the Jesus who really was and what he taught.

So that's my methodological conviction and assumption. If you believe that, what a lifelong challenge and treasure lies before you to meditate day and night on the four gospels with a view to knowing your Lord Jesus with ever-deepening understanding, ever-deepening love, ever-deepening fellowship. I really believe that the ultimate reason that the Lord gave us four distinct portraits of Jesus is that we might more fully and accurately see and savor the glories of the Savior and that we might personally, in the gospel and the gospels, fellowship with him as we personally meet him in what he did and what he said.

I really believe that where you meet and fellowship with the living Christ is in the gospels. And what he says and what he did stands forth, illumined by the spirit, as a living friend acting before you, speaking to you, so that if you linger here for a lifetime, you will be very ready to meet him when you die. And he will not be a stranger because he will be who you have met.

And it's really sad, so sad, when in university courses and so many seminary courses, we are deflected from this glorious task to just peeling and peeling and finding little modicum of so-called historical residue, which you then piece together into some kind of imaginary picture that isn't the real picture at all. So I'm pleading with you to settle this for yourself relatively quickly, that you will read the gospels as they stand, believing that if you really understand what's there in its fullness, with all of them together, you will have a more accurate portrait of the Jesus who really was and really is, than if you did all the peeling away, using all kinds of historical criteria, which are very arbitrary. So that's the methodological assumption and some of my goals.

So I invite you now to open your Bibles to Luke 18. We're going to look at verses 9 to 14, especially, as you might imagine, but not only. How should we read this paragraph in Luke 18, 9 to 14, about the Pharisee and the tax collector? We will read it in view of the big picture that Luke gives us of Jesus, with some of the big flags that he waves, and we will look at it in relationship to the immediately surrounding area, because there are things outside this paragraph that are explosively relevant for the meaning of this paragraph.

So let's talk about the big picture for a minute in Luke. I believe that every single verse of all four Gospels is meant to be read in the shadow, the conscious shadow, of the cross and what Jesus accomplished there. And I think that each of the four Gospel writers intends for me to say that, intends to be read that way, and you can tell that because of the fact that they all signal early on that that's what they want you to do.

We'll give you the example just from Luke here. So chapter 2, verse 10, the angels are speaking. Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people.

For unto you this day in the city of David is born a what? A Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Now, what kind of Savior? How is He going to save? Does Luke leave us to guess at what kind of Savior He has at the front end of the Gospel announced that we should read the Gospel in light of? And he doesn't leave us in doubt. Let me give you two examples of what he does.

He connects the sufferings of this Jesus and His death with new covenant forgiveness of sins. So here's Luke 22, 20. This cup, Jesus says, is poured out for you, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in my blood.

So when I shed my blood, I'm purchasing the new covenant for you. And what is that according to Jeremiah 31, 34? It is, I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin. No more.

So it's very clear in the Jesus of Luke, which is the Jesus, that His bloodshedding is the means by which the new covenant promise of, I will forgive my people's sins, is obtained. So Luke is saying that clearly. He wants every verse in this Gospel to be read that way.

No, that's who you're dealing with here. Keep that in mind. That is mega important in knowing every single sentence in this book.

And so, he wants you to read this book over and over and over again with that in view. Here's the second way he does it. And he's unique here in his explicitness.

Luke connects the sufferings of Jesus with the sufferings of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, which is hugely significant for what I'm about to do here this evening. For example, he says in Luke 22, 37, Jesus talking in the garden, night before He dies, I tell you, this Scripture must be fulfilled in me. Quote, and He was numbered with the transgressors, close quote.

Four, what is written about me has its fulfillment. So this is crystal clear. There's zero doubt that Jesus reads Isaiah 53, what is written about me? And in the verse just preceding Isaiah 53, 12, from which that quote comes, you read about justification.

He was numbered with the transgressors, verse 12, now verse 11 of Isaiah 53. Out of the anguish of His soul, He shall see and be satisfied. By His knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous.

Sounds so Romans 5, right? Sounds so Pauline, sounds so Reformed. So in the Gospel of Luke, the way Jesus saves is by shedding His blood for the forgiveness of sins and by being a righteous one by whom many are counted righteous. This we know from the clear identification of Jesus with the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

Now, that's the big picture. So let's go to the text and you can follow with me now in verses 9 to 14 of Luke 18. So this is Jesus helping me know what He thought about justification.

And it's pretty radical. Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all I get. But the tax

collector standing afar off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but he has his breast saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. So you can tell by the way this parable comes to a climax in verse 14 that it's about justification.

This man went down to his house justified rather than the other. And the parable is about how one gets justified and how one doesn't get justified. Now, he doesn't tell the whole story here.

He hasn't died yet for sins. He doesn't state everything that can be said about justification here. But my, oh my, what he does teach us is most important.

There are three things we need to see about the people who trust in themselves that they are righteous. That's verse 9. So he's got a group of people in mind, and he's using the Pharisee in the parable as an example of a group of people who are trusting in themselves that they are righteous. So here's the first thing.

His righteousness is moral. Second thing, his righteousness is religious. Third thing, he believes his righteousness is the gift of God.

Let's take those one at a time. Verses 10 and 11, his righteousness is moral. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee.

That's the one that trusts that he's righteous. And the other, a tax collector, terrible reputation for cheating people. Verse 11, the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus, God, I thank you that I'm not like other men.

Here's the list, extortioners, those steal, unjust, and adulterers. I have good business dealings, and I don't cheat on my wife. So he's moral.

So he's saying, I have a moral righteousness. I'm a morally upright man, and he is by at least outward standards. And that was his confidence.

He told this parable to those who trusted in themselves that they were this way. So his confidence is reposing on this righteousness. Number two, his righteousness was religious or ceremonial.

Verse 12, I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all I get. So you could call that religious or ceremonial acts, fasting and tithing.

So the spiritual disciplines are in place in this man's life. He's morally upright, and he is religiously devout. And he rests in this.

He told this parable to those who trusted in themselves that they were morally, and religiously, and ceremonially upright and devout. Number three, here's the catch. He believed, verse 11, that this moral uprightness and religious devotion was a gift from God.

He says in verse 11, the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus, God, I thank you, he's giving God the credit. I thank you that I am not like other men. Then he gives his list.

So he's not a Pelagian. Pelagians believed that left to yourself, you could make yourself good, choose enough good things, and you would become good. There's no reason even to think that he's a semi-Pelagian who believes that God needs to give you a jump start in your goodness, in your choices, and in your inclinations, but then leaves the decisive act to you.

There's no reason to think that he is semi-Pelagian either. We don't know much about this man's will. We just know he's, in his mouth anyway, saying thank you God that I have not cheated on my wife.

And thank you God that I haven't cheated at work. And thank you God that I fast. And thank you for giving me the inclinations to be an upright and a religious man.

That's his confidence that God has done this in him. So Jesus told this parable, verse 9, to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. The issue here, the problem here is not whether the man himself has produced the righteousness.

He's not putting himself forward as a legalist. And Jesus is not putting himself forward as a classic merit-obtaining legalist. He doesn't appear to be doing anything to earn anything.

He's giving God the credit for working it in him. He says explicitly that he's thanking God. He's not trusting in himself to make himself righteous.

That's not what Jesus says. He's trusting in himself that he is righteous. Huge difference.

This text is more radical than some make it out to be in its teaching on justification. He's trusting in himself that he is righteous. He's not trusting in himself to make himself righteous.

That would be classical legalism, and we'd all say he's trying to earn his salvation, therefore he's not saved. This man is saying, I thank you, God, for making me righteous, and I'm trusting in myself that I am this way because you've made me this way. His mistake is not that he claimed to be able to do righteousness without God.

His mistake is where he's putting his confidence, and he's putting it in God-wrought righteousness. At least as far as his own opinion goes, that's what he's doing. So that's the issue with regard to justification according to verse 14, because that's where we end up.

He was looking at the wrong basis. It says, the other man went down to his house justified rather than this one. So the Pharisee was not justified.

Even though he thought that he was. He had the wrong ground, namely, the kind of doing, feeling, performing that was in himself that God had put there. At least that was his theology.

He's looking at the wrong basis. He's looking at the wrong person. He's looking at himself and what God had made of him as the ground of his acceptance with God.

Not because he created it, but because he acted it. It was inherent. It was imparted righteousness.

It was his, not because he caused it, but because he performed it by God's enablement, at least in his own theology, that's what he did. So he's not presented as a legalist who earns his salvation. One thing is the issue here.

He was morally upright. He was religiously devout. And he believed God made him that way.

And he is trusting in what God made of him. Now, are we on the right track? Go back to chapter 17, verse 10. We'll just take one verse.

Instead of reading the whole story, you remember the story as soon as I point you to it. I find this verse shocking. I'm not even sure I get the whole import of it.

But I think I can say what generally commentators say and so here's Jesus in Luke 17, 10. So you also, when you have done all that was commanded of you, say, we are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty.

Now, that is simply astonishing, I think. It's as though Jesus had the Pharisee of Luke 18, 11 in view here. The man lists his moral and religious achievements in Luke 18.

And Jesus doesn't focus on whether, in fact, he had done them. He doesn't say, oh, no, no, no, no, no. That's not an accurate list.

You haven't done those things. He doesn't go that route at all. What he focuses on is, it doesn't matter whether you've done them all.

Because I've already said, just a few paragraphs ago, that you can do them all. And if that's where you trust, nothing. They don't count for anything.

You're an unworthy servant. The tax collector, look at verses 13 and 14. On the other hand, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. So what becomes of the Pharisee? The Pharisee? Don't miss those four terrifying words in verse 14. Rather than the other.

The tax collector went down to his house justified. God viewed him as just, righteous, acceptable. Rather than the other one.

Which means, the other one perished. He was not justified. What about the tax collector? What did he do? He looked away from anything in himself.

Unlike the Pharisee, just looked away. He knew, if I go in here, I'm not finding any place to stand. I have nothing to commend me to God.

And of course, if he had heard 17:10, which he may have, which might have undone him, he would say, even if I had done everything that I could possibly do, I'd have no place to stand. I would be an unworthy servant, and would not be able to commend myself for God's justification. Now, from this side of the cross, we know more about how God justifies the ungodly.

God made Christ to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God. That's a sentence from the Apostle Paul. By trusting Christ alone, we are united to Christ, in Him, and in Him, we become God's righteousness.

So, Christ is the righteous one, and by faith, we unite to Him, and what He is counts for us, and He is perfect. He totally fulfilled everything required of human beings, and we get that counted to us, according

to 2 Corinthians 5, 21. Now, is there a clue, in the context of Luke 18, that Jesus thinks that way, even before the cross? When He can't say it just like that, is there a clue? There is a clue, and the clue is in, there are a lot of clues.

I'm being very selective here. I encourage you for your own, like I said, lifelong, joyful meditation, so that you can do what John MacArthur did this morning. I just sat there, reveling in the manifest evidence that MacArthur just meditates on these Gospels, just seeing things that are just golden.

He wouldn't do that, if he were just constantly peeling away, or using five highlighters to put all the different pieces together, and be so distracted, he couldn't see what's on the face of it. The parable of the, or not the parable, the rich young ruler, it's not called young here, but look at Luke 18, 18. And the reason I said the clues are all over the place is because I'd love to just camp with you on the fact that right after the justification paragraph, and exalt yourself to be humbled, humble yourself to be exhausted, he goes to children, helpless, little, trusting children.

That's not insignificant. The order there is not insignificant, but we'll just leave that because I'm after something even more amazing. Start at verse 18 of chapter 18.

A ruler asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. And you know the commandments. Well, here they come now.

We can get this list again. It's like we had with the Pharisee and like we had in 1710. You know the commandments.

Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother. And he said, as though to quote 1710 and 1811, he said, all these I've kept from my youth. That sound familiar? We've seen this before.

I've kept all these from my youth. Now notice, for Jesus, the issue is not whether he's right or not. All these I have kept from my youth.

Jesus didn't say, no, no, no, no, no. That's not true. What did he say? All these I have kept from my youth.

Jesus said in verse 22, one thing, one thing you lack. Sell all that you have, distribute to the poor. You'll have treasure in heaven.

Come, follow me. Now, this is amazing. He lacks only one thing.

Whoa, really? How can this be? How perfect is this man? He lacks only one thing. In other words, if he had had that one thing, he'd have everything, because he only lacks one. He'd be perfect.

In fact, Matthew says that. If you would be perfect, then he gives the same quote here. If you would be perfect, go sell what you possess, give to the poor, then you'll have treasure in heaven.

Come, follow me. That's Matthew 19, 21. So he's not perfect.

He lacks one thing. What does he lack? What's missing? Five commandments? No. Two? One? What's the one thing he's missing? It's kind of odd, because the answer that Jesus gives is three things.

Or is it? Verse 22. Number one, sell what you possess. Number two, give it to the poor.

Number three, follow me. So how's that one thing? This is what I think he means, and I'll try to show you why. Your attachment to your possessions needs to be replaced by your attachment to me.

That's the one thing you need, me. So here's the picture. The man's hand is full of money.

And he's coming, saying, how can I have eternal life? Keep the commandments. List them off. I've done that.

And Jesus says, okay, here's what you really need. One thing. So you need to open this hand, where all that money is, and let the money fall, and where it falls is on the poor.

So it always falls. When this kind of transaction is in the offing, offing that the money falls on the poor. And let me have your hand.

So replace attachment to money, which then falls on the poor. So the one thing he needs is not what he's letting go, but what he's getting. You don't need what you're letting go.

You need what you're getting. And what he's getting is Jesus. You need me.

I'm shifting categories on you here. I'm not adding two or three or one or 10 commandments. You need those three.

You kept these well, you need those three. I've already settled that. Keep them all.

Keep them all. And you will be an unworthy servant. You need me.

I am your only hope if you would be perfect. I'm borrowing Matthew's phrase. If you would have what you have when you add the one thing you need.

Everything. So my answer is, yeah, there's a clue. Yeah, there's a clue as to how one has eternal life, how one gets right with God, how one becomes acceptable to an infinitely holy God, how one becomes justified in this life and the next.

And the clue is you need me. All I have is Christ. Jesus is my life.

It's amazing to me the implications that flow from all this. So I'm gonna start listing them off. And I've got seven and we'll pack them into 15 minutes.

Here we go. Seven implications of what we've just seen. So my conclusion will be the first one.

I was trying to answer a question and here's the answer I have. Jesus taught, implication number one, Jesus taught the doctrine of justification by faith on the basis of an imputed righteousness, not an inherent righteousness, which the Pharisee had. In fact, when you listen to Paul say what happened to him as a Pharisee, the parallels with this text are uncanny.

If anyone thinks that he has reason to boast, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. No, I almost left one out.

As to the law, a Pharisee. As to zeal, a persecutor of the church. As to righteousness in the law, blameless.

That's Paul. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss, Luke 17, 10, for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have lost everything and counted as rubbish in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own based on law, but the righteousness that comes through faith, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

My answer is Jesus preached that gospel. That's Philippians three, as you know. Implication number two, no matter how righteous you are, or how moral you are, or how religious you are, and no matter whether God has worked that in you, or you have worked that in you, don't trust in it.

Don't trust in anything that is in you. I don't care how good it is, and I don't care if it's the work of the Holy Spirit. Don't trust in what God has worked in you.

Don't trust in it. Trust in Christ alone, and his work in his life, and on the cross, his blood and righteousness. Trust that, trust that for your acceptance with God, for your justification.

That's implication number two. Number three, take heart, oh human being. Take heart, oh fellow struggler within dwelling sin.

Take heart with your struggle, in your struggle, within dwelling sin. That's Paul's phrase from Romans seven. And remember that you're standing as a cherished, justified child of God.

Your standing is not based in yourself, but in Christ alone. When you feel like a failure as a father, or a husband, or a pastor, or a friend, where are you gonna look if not here? How are you gonna survive? When Satan accuses that we don't measure up and reminds us that God's standards are perfection, and he has lots of text to choose from, and Satan knows the Bible really well. When he accuses that we have never done perfectly any deed, you believe you've ever done a perfect deed? You believe you've ever done anything out of love for God, it is with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, so you haven't just messed up a few times, you mess up every time.

We're not told in vain to pray every day for our daily bread and forgive us our sins. We sin every time we repent of sinning. What are you gonna do? How can you endure it? How can you endure being a fallen human being before God like this? It will not be, I promise you, it will not work.

Some of you are living in tremendous fear and defeat because you're trying to trust in God's work in your life. You're trying to trust in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And this text that we've looked at is designed to help you be free from that false foundation for your trust.

Number four, implication number four. Don't forget, therefore, that all moral transformation that pleases God is the fruit, not the root of justification. The Pharisee, it says in Luke 18, nine, looked on others with contempt.

Not even a believer in the sovereignty of God can trust in his inherent righteousness and escape lovelessness. Seems to me that this Pharisee said, I thank you, God, thank you, God, thank you, that I have not committed extortion or lied or cheated and that I fast. Oh, I praise you for working in me these wonderful God-commanded things.

That did not keep him from a spirit of contemptuousness toward a weaker brother, another person. It won't work in you either. The fruit of justification is love and the justification that bears that fruit is not a trust in inherent or inwrought righteousness, but imputed righteousness.

In other words, only one understanding of justification gets us to the root of pride and the root of untold evils in our hearts and that's a lifelong battle, even so. An example from history for those of you who care deeply about the social realm and the political realm and the impact of the church, your hero is probably William Wilberforce. Just make sure that you understand what drove this man.

He only wrote one book in his life, *A Practical View of Christianity*. He was a busy man. He wasn't about writing books.

He was about killing the slave trade. Took him 20 plus years to do it and then another several in order to knock off not just the slave trade, but slavery in England, period. What drove this man? Why did he think Christianized England could tolerate this? Why did he think that? And he told us absolutely clearly in the book.

I really commend that book to you. It's available in print today. It will blow you away.

You will never, there's no politician in America that I know of who's driven doctrinally like William Wilberforce was. And the doctrine that drove him was justification by faith. And his explanation for why nominal Christian England was so compromised in its morality is that they didn't understand the relationship between root and fruit in justification.

I'll read it to you. Quote, the mistaken conception entertained of the fundamental principles of Christianity was missing. Again, I didn't read that right.

All immoral behavior of nominal Christians of his age resulted from, quote, the mistaken conception entertained of the fundamental principles of Christianity, period. They consider not that Christianity is a scheme for justifying the ungodly by Christ dying for them when yet sinners, a scheme for reconciling us to God when enemies, and I've got this in italics, for making the fruits of holiness the effects, not the cause of our being justified and reconciled. Close quote.

Paraphrase. Nominal Christian evangelical England sold its soul to global slave trade because they didn't get it that all moral transformation is the fruit of imputed righteousness, not the root of our righteousness. The fruit of being accepted by God, not the root of being accepted by God.

The fruit of God being 100% for us, not the root of his being 100% for us. That's amazing that a politician would see that. This error that he is commenting on is increasing in our day, one of the adjustments to the gospel that I'm, I would like to write one more book in my life, a small one, on justification, and it would be on this particular issue.

The error is very common right now, and here's the way it goes. There are young people and older ones, but I think it's especially among the 20-somethings, 30-somethings who are frustrated with the nominalism in the church and the lack of seriousness and radical devotion to Jesus' ethics among so-called believers, and all this talk about being justified by faith alone seems like a carte blanche for godlessness and all kinds of wealth and evil behavior that just gets a pass from imputation. It's just churning inside, and without thinking through, like Wilberforce did, the implications, they say, okay, one solution to this, to lift the seriousness with which evangelical people take the moral, ethical dimension of Jesus and the New

Testament and our society is to put it into the ground of justification.

Then we'll get serious about it because heaven and hell will hang in a balance. Because if you just keep leaving it out here on the fruit level instead of the root level, okay, surah, surah, let us sin that grace may abound. That's not the way to solve that problem, and the reason it's not, I mean, there are lots of reasons.

There are exegetical reasons like Romans 6, but ethically, the reason is because you shoot yourself not just in the foot, but in the heart. You want to change the world, and you see a lot of reformed types and a lot of religious types mouthing justification, and nothing's changing, and so you're gonna fix this, and you're gonna fix it by elevating the seriousness of the fruit by making it a root. Guess what? The plant dies.

You don't wanna do it that way. There may be other things wrong. Maybe people really did never take seriously the doctrine.

Maybe they never even dreamed how sinful they were and how hopeless it would be to make some moral transformation the basis of their acceptance with God. Number five, implication number five, never forget that all your good attitudes, your good intentions, and your good deeds will serve at the judgment, not as the ground of your acceptance, but only as the public fruit and evidence and confirmation that you were born again, you had faith, you were united to Christ, who alone is your righteousness. Now, that was a very long sentence.

Oh, my, is this important. Here's what I'm after in this point. I want you with exegetical wisdom soon, like in the next year or two, work this out, settle it that every single time you read in the Old or New Testament a condition given to believers for eternal life, and there are many, those who do such things will not enter into the kingdom of heaven, 1 Corinthians 6, 9, and Galatians 5, 22, and many others in Jesus.

Every time you read a sentence in the Bible that makes a doing, an acting, a condition of eternal life so that it will somehow be brought up at the last day, remember, it's a condition the way evidence and confirmation and fruit are conditions. You will stand before the living God. I like to think, for example, of the thief on the cross.

Okay, a lifetime of sin. All he did was sin for what, 40 years? He's dying, may begin by cursing, like we heard from John, bam, the spirit blew. Where it wills, no explanation.

This man's repenting, he's crying out for mercy, and Jesus says, see in paradise today, that man will experience the judgment according to works. What will he have? Not many, half an hour's worth, but they're sweet and they're real. So the file will be opened, the books and the book.

You get the book of life and you get the books. These books are really thick. Everything you've ever done, every idle word, Jesus says, everything, they're all written down.

So this man's file's gonna be picked up like this, whoa. And just everyone is F, his grades are all F. Pick him up, throw him out. It's got a little teeny file at the back.

And in it is, heart was broken for his sin, recognized Savior, lovingly exhorted his comrade in evil, died, and the Lord will hold this up to the whole universe. He was real. He trusted my son.

This is the evidence. So that had he ever read a commandment in the Bible that says you will not enter into the kingdom without a work, he'd know how to interpret it. The work isn't the ground of his acceptance.

The work was the fruit of this amazing opening of his heart, believing in Jesus, being justified, and the fruit for 15 minutes, half an hour, an hour, and that goes written down. So what I'm saying is, settle this, because otherwise you're going to be knocked off balance page after page after page in the Bible, because there are dozens and dozens of paragraphs and sentences that make heaven contingent on believers' obedience. They're all over the place.

Just got to get this clear. If you're going to be thrown off balance every time you read one of those and say, God, I don't know if justification by faith is really true. It looks like works are really mingled into the foundation here because they're made contingent, they're made conditions of the final outcome.

Evidence, confirmation, fruit, get a hold of that. That's different. You can only please God with an act of obedience that's rooted in the confidence he's already 100% on your side.

Is that clear? You can only please God with some act of behavior or attitude which is flowing from the confidence he is totally on my side for Jesus' sake alone. That's the kind of fruit that will glorify Christ. Two more quickly.

My time is up. I can do this in three minutes maybe. Implication number six.

The gospel of Christ's righteousness imputed to us as the basis of our acceptance with God through faith alone is universally globally needed and universally valid in every culture and should be spoken to every person and every people group on the planet. The first Adam, father of all human beings, failed and we all failed in him. The second Adam, Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, comes into the world, never fails.

Not in one act of faith, not in one act of obedience, not in one attitude, he never failed. That he did for the nations because every Muslim people group, Hindu people group, Buddhist people group, animist people group you go to, they've all got the same problem. They're in Adam and they fail and they must have an alien righteousness.

There is no other way for them to be saved than in Christ Jesus. This is universally relevant, universally valid and so I'm pleading with you. Turn this 7,000 into a kind of army locally and globally that is unashamed in offering this best news in all the world to the nations and the neighborhoods.

As by one man's disobedience, many were appointed sinners, so by one man's obedience, many will be appointed righteous that flies everywhere on the planet. Finally, number seven, give Christ all his glory in the work of salvation, not just half of it. I suppose when I'm asked, what's a beef piper? Why are you just so worked up about this imputation, impartation, mingling works with a little bit of the ground? I mean, the people that didn't, it's not that.

My last answer here and in those conversations is the main purpose for the universe is that Jesus Christ be glorified and that the grace of God be glorified in the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus did two things. He bore our punishment, our sins in his body and was broken and pierced for our transgressions.

So my punishment goes on to him and I receive forgiveness of sins. They will not count against me. That's one thing that he did.

That's half his glory. Understand the word half is not mathematical here because there are a lot of other things he did. But just in these two.

The other thing he did was never sin, perfectly righteous. He was the righteous one by whom many are accounted righteous. So he perfectly obeyed, never failed.

That obedience, as it says in Philippians 2, came to its climax unto death. Obedience unto death, even death on a cross. And that whole act of obedience, the life, becomes mine by imputation when by faith I am united with him.

He did both. He bore my sin and he became my righteousness. He provided my pardon and he provided my perfection.

And if you strip this away, the cross is sliced in half. The glory is cut in half. I don't want to stand before Jesus at the last day and have him say, I did so much more.

Did so much more than what you ever acknowledged. So don't rob the Lord of his glory. He's our pardon.

He's our perfection. Therefore, knowing that Jesus and Paul preached the same gospel, let's join Paul in saying, I count everything as loss for the surpassing value 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 might gain Christ and be found in him.

Not having even a God-wrought righteousness of my own, but the righteousness that comes through faith. The righteousness from God that depends on faith. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Jesus is my life, let's pray. Father, we want to get this not just right in our heads.

We're so prone to argue about these things and try to be precise about them and forget this is a waterfall of grace. There are so many things that we can do and there are so many strugglers in this room right now who if they could see, if you would blow now upon them so that eyes began to open, what a freedom, what a release, what a toe-tapping, heel-clicking, soaring liberty would come into their lives and what transformation, what boldness, what courage, what risk-taking love for the neighborhoods and the nations might emerge. So God, I'm asking that you would open our eyes.

Open our eyes so that when we sing, hallelujah, all I have is Christ, hallelujah, Jesus.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Op1uUdE_32k.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-piper/did-jesus-preach-the-gospel-of-evangelicalism/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net