

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

April 5, 2022

Justifying the Ungodly

Part 3 of 5

As we continue with the Apostle Paul's revelation of the multifaceted work of justification, we see that it continues to get richer and fuller with each verse. Paul began by showing that justification comes through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus and it brings forgiveness for our past sins. He then shows that it can only be received by faith. In **Part 3** we will discover how God uses justification to reach those who were deemed "unreachable."

God Justifies the Ungodly

Paul makes a very revealing statement when he writes of God *"who justifieth the ungodly."* Romans 4:5. This is different from the example of Abraham's justification. The *"ungodly"* in this passage speaks of the blatant sinner. It is the person who has walked without regard to God or his word. Yet, there are two great examples of God *"justifying the ungodly"* found in the scripture. The first may surprise some because the *"ungodly"* person is none other than Israel's King David.

Although David was a “*man after God’s own heart*” when God chose him to be king over Israel, there was a period in his life when he was far from being such a person. David not only committed adultery, but his attempt to cover up his sin included having Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, killed. David continued to hide his guilt until God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him. It was only after the horror of his sins were exposed that David began to humble himself before God in true repentance.

As David’s heart broke over depths he had sunken to, he acknowledged his sin before God. He was torn apart, knowing that the blood of an innocent and honorable man was upon his hands. David cried, “*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God...*” Psalms 51:14, and “*my sin is ever before me.*” Psalms 51:3. David knew he was in no condition to approach God with any claim of righteousness. For him to even offer a sacrifice would have been insulting unto God. He told God, “*For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*” Psalms 51:16-17.

Paul uses David in this condition as an example of God “*justifying the ungodly,*” He quotes David from Psalms 32 where we see what God looks for in the ungodly that causes him to justify them. David wrote the following:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in

whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Psalms 32:1-5.

When David attempted to cover his sin and “kept silence” God had no regard for David or his prayers. Only when he acknowledged his sin unto God and ceased his attempts to hide it from men did God forgive him. Those who teach automatic forgiveness are lying to you. In David’s words we discover that without anything to offer God other than a broken and contrite heart, the ungodly can find favor with God.

David did not come with sacrifices and religious works. Instead, he humbled himself in true repentance and called upon the LORD. His “*faith*,” which came from a broken and contrite heart was the only “*righteousness*” David could offer unto God. Yet, this was exactly what God was looking for. This is why Paul said, “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*” Romans 4:5. This means that his “*faith*,” which issued from his “*broken and contrite heart*,” was a true “*sacrifice of righteousness*” unto the Lord. Psalms 4:5, 51:19.

David was not redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, but he did find that God would forgive his transgressions and cover the horrible sins of

yesterday. His great iniquity would not be counted against him because in *“godly sorrow”* 11 Corinthians 7:10 he offered the only thing God is willing to receive from an ungodly person.

Jesus confirms this justification of the ungodly in the account of the Pharisee and the publican in the Temple. While the Pharisee boasted in his own goodness, the publican *“...would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”* Luke 18:13. This penitent sinner had the same *“broken and a contrite heart”* that David spoke of. Jesus said, *“this man went down to his house justified rather than the other...”* Luke 18:14. Those who approach God with religious works rather than a *“broken and contrite heart”* will always be rejected of the Lord, but God is always willing to *“justify the ungodly”* if the ungodly are ready to turn from their wickedness and trust in Jesus Christ.

Peace with God

The next aspect of justification as revealed by the Apostle Paul is *“peace with God.”* Paul said, *“Therefore being justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...**”* Romans 5:1. This speaks of a cessation of hostilities. It means the war between us and God is over. In verse 5 Paul says, *“For if, **when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...**”* Romans 5:5. Again, Paul told the Colossians, *“And you, that were sometime alienated and **enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled...**”* Colossians 1:21. Sin in your heart

and mind causes you to be an enemy of God. In fact, Paul tells us “...***the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.***” Romans 8:7. As we will discover in later statements by Paul, the things which made us an enemy of God are dealt with in this redeeming work of justification. Through Jesus Christ, our war with God is over!