

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

April 11, 2022

Justifying the Ungodly

Part 4 of 5

In **parts 1-3 of Justifying the Ungodly**, as we follow the Apostle Paul through the various aspects of our justification, the things he speaks of very much resemble the justification those like Abraham and David experienced. Now Paul begins to speak of treasures given to us through the justifying power of Christ that the patriarchs *“were persuaded of,”* but could only *“see afar off.”* Hebrews 11:13.

Entering this Grace

As Paul continues revealing the various aspects of our justification, he shares how it brings us into a new spiritual arena, saying, *“...we have access by faith **into this grace** wherein we stand...”* Romans 5:2.” The words *“this grace”* speak of a specific “grace” which was unknown to the patriarchs such as Abraham, Moses, or David. The Apostle Peter told us the prophets who *“who prophesied of **the grace** that should come unto you...”* knew *“this grace”* was something that was *“not unto themselves”* | Peter 1:10-12, but would come with *“...the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”* | Peter 1:10-11. This is where the riches of the glory of Christ truly begin. It is

through entering *“this grace”* that a person is transformed from sinner to saint, from unrighteous to righteous, from children of Adam to sons and daughters of God.

If we are to comprehend *“this grace,”* we must understand the two manners of justification involved in our redemption. The first is *“justification by faith”* Romans 5:1, which brings us into *“justification by grace.”* Romans 3:24. *“Faith”* is a virtue which proceeds from the heart of a person and reaches upwards to God, whereas, *“grace”* proceeds from God and reaches downward unto us. Our faith does not make us to be new creations, but *“justification by grace”* does! When God accepts our faith in Christ as a righteous sacrifice (faith counted for righteousness), he responds by sending his grace upon us. This is where our transformation takes place. *“By grace are you saved (delivered), through faith...”* Ephesians 2:8. Faith and grace are partners in our salvation.

Saved from Wrath

In showing yet another aspect of justification, Paul reminds us of the love of God who gave his Son to redeem us, saying, *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Romans 5:8. This is a wonderful truth, but there is more! Paul’s next words are, *“**Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**”* Romans 5:9. Paul assures us that this great reconciliation through the blood of Christ not only gives us peace with God today, but deliverance from God’s wrath in the day of

judgment. Yet, as if this were not enough, Paul's next words tell us to hold on to our seats because things are going to get even more glorious.

Made Righteous

It is at this point the Apostle Paul jumps right into the heart of the gospel message. He begins this next aspect of justification with the words ***“And not only so...”*** Romans 5:11. With these words Paul is telling us there is still more to come in his explanation of justification. There is *“much more!”* He says, *“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”* Romans 5:11. This is more than *“remission of sins that are past,”* more than the *“righteousness of faith,”* more than *“justifying the ungodly,”* more than *“peace with God,”* and more than *“saved from wrath.”* The Greek word in this verse which is translated as *“atonement”* means *“exchange,”* which is *“an act of giving one thing and receiving another in return.”* In the next ten verses, Paul tells us what this *“exchange”* is all about.

To show the full work of justification, Paul takes us back to the fall of humanity into sin. He reminds us that *“...by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* Romans 5:12. He uses this knowledge to demonstrate what the purpose of Christ's sufferings was actually all about. Adam's act of disobedience which brought us all down into sin, is presented as a sort of pattern to explain how Christ's act of obedience upon the cross lifts us up into righteousness.

Paul shows that as Adam gave us sin and death, Jesus Christ brings us the “gift of righteousness.” He says, *“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”* Romans 5:17. In truth, Jesus Christ changes everything Adam brought upon us. Paul speaks of how *“by the righteousness of one (Jesus Christ) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* Romans 5:18. There is a free gift which completely changes the person who believes upon Christ. Paul calls this change *“justification of life.”*

What does *“justification of life”* mean? In his next words, Paul explains this for all to see clearly. He says, ***“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*** Romans 5:19. The great *“exchange”* in the atonement is that God gave his Son to die upon the cross. In *“exchange”* he received a people who are delivered from Adam and his sin, and through the power of the blood of Christ are *“made righteous!”* Do not be deceived into thinking this is just a theological pronouncement or *“just the way God sees you.”* No! Those who are justified by grace are made righteous in the same manner that those born of Adam were made to be sinners. Only an unrighteousness accountant would declare an unrighteousness ledger to be just. And only an unjust God would declare an unrighteous person to be righteous. Redemption does not just declare us to be righteous; it makes us righteous!

Paul confirms this to the believers at Corinth, saying, “*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***” II Corinthians 5:21. God’s people are a righteous people!