

August 29, 2024

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH - PART 1

For centuries, justification and sanctification have been viewed as sort of a step 1 and step 2 of the Christian experience. In general, justification has been presented as affecting our standing with God, whereas sanctification is taught to be about our cleanliness before God, whether positionally or in real-life experience. Almost all gospel teaching tries to fit within this framework in one way or another. For many years I have questioned the explanations given of both of these works, but today I see clearly that the basic framework itself is fatally flawed. **An honest reading of the scripture shows clearly that justification and sanctification are not two different works, but rather two different ways of explaining this wonderful gospel of Christ to two very different audiences.** Justification explained the gospel in terms the Greco-Roman world could relate to while presenting the gospel as “*the righteousness,*” or justice, of God. Romans 1:16-17. On the other hand, sanctification explained the same gospel in terms the Hebrews understood based upon the purification requirements of the Law of Moses.

The Apostle Paul is the only New Testament writer who presented the gospel in terms of

“justification,” which he did in Acts, Romans, Galatians, and Titus. He was an apostle to the Gentiles, and it seems the gospel he received by revelation was tailored to speak to the Gentiles and not easily understood by the early Jewish believers. Peter spoke of Paul’s epistles, saying, **“...in which are some things hard to be understood...”** II Peter 3:15-16. Paul seems to acknowledge his different way of presenting the gospel when he tells of the trip he and Barnabas took to Jerusalem to see the other Apostles. He said, *“I went up by revelation, and **communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles...**”* He also says, *“...when they saw that the **gospel of the uncircumcision** was committed unto me, as the **gospel of the circumcision** was unto Peter.”* Galatians 2:7. It was not a different gospel, but it was a distinctly different way of presently it.

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul famously wrote, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For **therein is the righteousness (or justice) of God revealed...**”* Romans 1:16-17. In the first three chapters, Paul is like a prosecutor who strips away every defense until we see the entire world guilty of sin and deserving damnation. Romans 3:19. It is at this point that Paul begins to show what steps God’s justice mandated for the salvation of humanity. He says, *“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested...”* Romans 3:21. We then discover that the first part of justification is forgiveness, or

“remission of sins that are past.” Romans 3:25. In the 4th chapter we find that justification comes only through faith, but in the 5th chapter we begin to see the transformation justification brings to the believer. God’s righteous judgment determined that if one man, Adam, made us to be sinners, then another man, Jesus Christ, would make us righteous. Paul clearly makes this known, saying, *“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 6th chapter of Romans explains to us how God’s work of justification transforms a sinner into a righteous creation. Paul said, *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* Romans 6:6. Our death in union with Christ is how God chose to deliver us from the power and presence of sin. Some claim this passage is explaining sanctification, but it is not. The next verse says, *“For he that is dead is freed from sin.”* Romans 6:7. What is important to see is that the word translated *“freed”* in this verse is the Greek word *“dikaioō”* which is the word Paul used for *“justified.”* Our deliverance from sin is the ultimate result of Christ’s work of *“justification!”* Paul then tells us that holiness is the fruit, or result, of being made free from sin by the justifying power of the cross of Christ. Romans 6:22. Instead of saying we are made holy by the work of sanctification, in Romans Paul presents that we are made holy by the power of justification.

In the 8th chapter of Romans, Paul gives an overview of all he has written so far. He says, “... *and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*” Romans 8:30. Any modern theologian would have said, “whom he called, he also justified, and whom he justified, he also sanctified,” but Paul says nothing here about being sanctified. Why is this? It is because Paul is not explaining the gospel based upon the purification requirements of the Law, but by presenting God’s justice to save sinners through the power of justification.