**Imputation and Justification – The Wall Between God and Man – BD03-01**

**Obedience**

 We are constantly receiving evidences and reminders of the truth of Hebrews 4:12 which tells us the word of God is living and powerful. The word of God is a living thing. In the book of John the Lord Jesus, in instructing His disciples in John 14:15 said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Verse 23 that same chapter Jesus said unto him the command, “Love me, he will keep my words. And my Father will love him we will come unto him and make our abode with him.” I think this is a very fascinating scripture which declares to us something that we perhaps often don’t stop to realize. That is while you and I may want to love God, that it is absolutely impossible to love God unless we know the word of God. That’s why we have so much false love among Christians today. We have so much sweetness and light. We have so much terminology which is meaningless and hollow and empty. We have so much pretending that we love God, and consequently that we love one another. But you cannot love God unless you know His word, this living word. That’s what He means when He says, “If you keep my commandments, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Obviously you can’t keep them if you don’t know them.

**The Holy Spirit**

 In John 14:26, “The Lord also said that the Comforter, who is also the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance whatever I have said unto you.” It is the Holy Spirit who is the one who will teach you this morning if you are rightly related to Him. If all of your known sin has been confessed, you will have an open channel as a spiritual Christian to receive this living Word. The Lord reminds us in Romans 8:16 through the apostle Paul that it is “His Holy Spirit who witnesses to our human spirit that we are the children of God.” God only speaks to you through your human spirit and He speaks to you on the basis of Bible doctrine that you have in your human spirit.

**Historical Jesus**

 A man stopped by my office last night and said, “You know I was at work some time ago, and the thought occurred to me of something I heard in the service about how Jesus Christ was a real man. He lived in a historical moment in time, and He shed actual blood that you could have felt wetting your hands. He died on the cross and you could have rubbed your hand on it and gotten a splinter in your finger from it.” The very fact of that tremendous reality which you see he received because he had Bible doctrine, he had Bible information. That’s what doctrine is. He said, “I just went about in an atmosphere of peace and calm that was strange even to me to experience to watch myself and feel myself going through because of the confidence that all is well with me and God.”

**Bible Doctrine**

 A college student observed to me recently that while at school where there are a lot of kids from fundamental backgrounds, that they may know or have heard the word of God. But the thing that they evidently lack, and quite evidently lack, is conviction. This student said, “While I hear something, and I can’t always put my finger on the verse in the Bible for the specific truth to answer that issue, yet God the Holy Spirit runs a red flag up in my mind and gives me a warning and a caution.” This was very well put because this is how doctrine works.

When you have received the word of God, it will automatically well up from within your human spirit and will guide you in all of your thinking and all of your decision making. It becomes frightening when you stop and think about it how much we have injured ourselves. What tremendous damage we do to our lives because we have not accepted the fact that the Bible is living Word. It is more than man’s word, it is God’s Word. Unless you receive it on a day by day basis and have a positive reaction to it, you are short changing your life. If you think there are other things that more important that are keeping you busy, you’d better reevaluated what the Bible has to say on that subject because God will protect you to the extent that you have positive understanding of the Word in your human spirit.

This morning we seek to add to a portion of that understanding as we take up the fifth in this series of the problem of a wall separating ourselves from God. Here’s this great wall just in review. It’s made up of several stones. Now all of these are interrelated admittedly, and God deals with them on the one basis of the blood of Jesus Christ shed on our behalf on the cross. Just for study purposes, we are breaking them up one at a time.

**Sin**

Here’s the subject of sin. Sin, which has separated us from God by putting us into the slave market. This has been solved by redemption which has brought us forgiveness. So that block is removed. It is no longer a problem. Another thing separating us from God was the penalty of spiritual death. God imposed spiritual death upon us for our sin. Jesus Christ came and died spiritually on the cross. In that moment, He expiated, or wiped out, our sins. Now consider yourself fortunate when you can learn something so tremendous as the fact that God has wiped out your sins because Jesus Christ died spiritually on the cross.

When we last left this subject, a man came up to me after the service and asked me about this. He said, “Did you say that Jesus Christ not only died physically, but He died spiritually on the cross?” So I explained to him how His agonizing cry, “My God, My God!”, one to the Father and one addressed to the Spirit of God indicated, “Why hast Thou forsaken me?” This indicated that He was separated from God which is what spiritual death is. I said, “Now that means that God has forgiven you, removed your sin.” But I said, “There’s another side to it and that’s what we’re going to come to next Sunday when we talk about the righteousness of God. God has given you something very great. He hasn’t simply removed the guilt of your sin.” He said, “Well that’s wonderful. I’ll wait and look forward to seeing that.” He’s not here this morning. Since that time, he’s come into problems in his own home. A runaway youngster whose drawings have vast host of teenagers who wander across the country, lost souls who think that the way to solve their problems is to get away from their parents who are the only solution that God has for their problems. So he’s not here this morning. That which he anticipated has been denied him for one reason or another.

God has given you a solution for your spiritual death and you’d better be delighted to know that truth. Our physical birth was another block. Because when we are born physically, we have an old sin nature, and that creates this spiritual death. God says there is only one solution and that is to be born again, that’s regeneration. Then we looked at the problem that man has separated from God because of the character of God- particularly the holiness of God. The holiness of God is made up of His justice and His righteousness. We looked last time at half of this block- the justice part. We saw that the solution for this is propitiation. Do you remember that the word “propitiation” means “satisfaction?” So God’s justice was satisfied in reference to the penalty that was due because of man’s sin. It was satisfied by the death of Christ on the cross. So another barrier to our reconciliation with God has been removed.

**Righteousness**

Now we’re going to look at the other part this morning, and this is the righteousness part, because you see there was another problem to God’s holiness. His justice had been met through the death of Christ. But we still had an imperfect righteousness when God says, “You can’t live in heaven unless you enter here with absolutely perfect righteousness. So human righteousness and God’s righteousness are two different things. Righteousness refers to that quality of goodness. When we speak of righteousness, we’re talking about goodness. For example, the scripture will sometimes interexchange these words. In Psalm 14:3 you have the Psalmist saying, “They are all gone aside. They are altogether become filthy. There is none that doeth good, no not one.” There is none that doeth good. Now in the New Testament when this verse is quoted in Romans 3:10 the writer uses the word righteousness as it is written, quoting Psalm 14:3, “there is none righteous, no not one.” So the meaning of righteousness is “goodness.”

Alright, God is perfect goodness, He’s absolute righteousness. Now before the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, man had perfect innocence. Therefore, he had perfect access to God. He was fit for fellowship with God. Man was told that he was free to learn anything he wanted in the Garden of Eden. There was only one thing that he was forbidden to learn. That was he was not to learn about evil. So he was told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was only to know about evil in terms of the fact that it was the opposite of good. So, the day came when Eve decided that being perfectly good was really missing something in life. So she led mankind into sin by learning evil by experience by eating of that tree.

We have a lot of young people today who have a Christian background, they have a Christian heritage. They often make this same stupid mistake that Eve made. They come to the time when they decide that maybe all the things that their Christian parents have told them is denying them some very real experiences in life. So they decide to learn some of the things that their parents have said, “That’s bad, that’s wrong, and that’s no good.” They have decided to learn this by personal experience. So they proceed to learn evil. Now the result was for Eve as it will be for you if you follow that course a deep separation from God. Isaiah 59:2 tells us that it is our sins that have separated us from God. Isaiah 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you that He will not hear.” What this verse is saying is that the sin that you have learned by personal experience is what has destroyed your relationship to God.

Now man has a relative righteousness. The Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9 for example that man is born in sin. He is basically evil because he has an inherited old sin nature. When God looks upon humanity, He sees everybody as sinners. Romans 3:10, “As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understands. What’s more, there is none that seeks after God. For they are all gone out of the way. They have together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no not one.” So verse 23 of Romans 3 sums it up, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Now the unbelievers object to this idea that man is basically evil. They say that man is basically good, and consequently they feel qualified to create their own standards of what is right and what is wrong. So society decides what’s good and what’s bad. From one society to another there is no common agreement. The whole thing amounts to the fact that some people, by whatever standard that society sets up, are better than other people. Nobody has perfect righteousness. So whatever class of humanity you may fall into, you fall short of God’s standard, and you are spiritually bankrupt.

You may fall into several categories. One, you may be this morning what we would call “the immoral person.” Now here’s a clear case of a person who lacks righteousness. Romans 1:18 describes this class of person down through that chapter in great detail. You look at this person and say, “Okay I see this guy who goes out and gets drunk, throws up, and sleeps up all night. What he threw up, he’s immoral. I see this character who lies and cheats and steals. He’s immoral. I can see that he falls short of the standard of God’s righteousness.” That’s all very clear. But, you may be in the category of the “moral person.” Like the Pharisee in the story of the Pharisee and the publican. Now what this person is doing is claiming his human goodness, but God says that this is not enough. Isaiah 64:6 tells us that, “All of our righteousness are as filthy rags.” All of our human good is in God’s sight short of the mark. So what we’re saying of the moral person is that his sins are more refined than another persons’. He too falls short. He too is in trouble with God and lacks perfect righteousness. But you say, “I’m a religious person. I can see how these two would miss it, but I don’t miss it because I’m a religious person.” Romans 2:28 takes up this problem of the religious person. “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter whose praise is not of men, but of God.” It doesn’t matter how men may praise you for your religious activities which is what the Pharisees sought, a certain self-righteousness. It matters how God is impressed with what you do with your religious deeds and your taboos. Matthew 5:20 says that, “Heaven demands a righteousness which is greater than that of the Pharisees.” The Pharisees had a righteousness which was the result of ritual practice of the things that they didn’t do and the things that they did do. But God says this man too is condemned.

So when you get hold of the fact that God is absolute righteousness, you finally begin to get the feeling of the immensity of the glory of God, and the hopelessness and the helplessness of man. Your words become something like those of Job in the 42th chapter, verses 5 and 6 when Job says, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes see Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” What Job is saying, “I’ve listen to what you are for a long time God, and I’ve learned a lot of things about you, but it’s all been up in my mind and I’ve been negative in my volition. But now with the eye of my understanding, I have gone positive, and I really see you as the absolute perfectly good person that you are God, and I look at myself, and I loathe myself for what I see in contrast.” Isaiah 6:5,another similar expression where the prophet says, “Woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.”

There is no man, there is no woman, there is no young person who can match God’s righteousness. If you and I look to ourselves to solve this problem, we are hopelessly doomed. The cross of Jesus Christ was the place where you and I find the answer to perfect righteousness. Romans 3:21, “But now the righteousness of God, that absolutely perfect righteousness of God, apart from the Law, a righteousness which is not by human things you do or don’t do is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Christ Jesus unto all and upon all them that believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” So if you want God’s righteousness there is a way that it’s available. God, who is righteous, has a solution and that’s what we want to look at.

**Imputation**

The solution for imperfect righteousness—we see the moral bankruptcy of man. We see that our sin puts us in moral debt to God. We have no assets to pay up. We’re born on the red side of the ledges, and there’s no way that we can earn the moral assets necessary to pay up. So God has solved this in two ways. We learn two great words this morning. One, is the word “imputation.” These are theological terms, but they’re fraught with very precious meaning. “Imputation” means “charging to someone’s account, charging something to another person’s account.” Do you remember that one of the categories of sin that we talked about was imputed sin? Imputed sin was the sin that you and I have received because of Adam’s sin. Romans 5:12 speaks of this imputed sin, “Wherefore by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all man. For that all have sinned.” This verse means that all sinned in Adam. He was our federal head. He acted in our behalf.

Now imputation describes the placing of our sins to the account of Jesus Christ who had no sins. Isaiah 53:4 is a description of this act of God where He imputes, or He charges to the account of Jesus Christ, all of your sins. Isaiah 53:4,“Surely He hath borne our griefs,” and the word “borne” means to carry something that someone has placed upon you that was not yours, “He has borne our griefs,” and notice it is our griefs that He has carried our sorrows, not His. When Jesus Christ was on the cross He was bearing something that belonged to you and me, not to Himself. Why did He do that? Verses 5-6 tell us. These describe the imputation, “But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him. With His stripes, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone his own way. The Lord hath laid down Him the iniquity of us all.”

In the Old Testament, the ritual was practiced of placing hands upon an animal that was to be sacrificed in behalf of one’s sins. The placing of the hands was the act of symbolizing imputing your sins, charging your sins to this animal who has died on your behalf. Well in effect, what God did was place His hand upon the head of His son Jesus Christ and said, “I place all the sins of the world on you,” which He did in a moment of time on the cross. This is the same thing illustrated by Paul’s statement to Philemon when he was writing to him about Onesimus, the runaway slave. It’s a classic illustration in the book of Philemon of the meaning of imputation. Philemon verse 17 Paul says, “If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him (that is this runaway slave), as myself. If he hath wronged thee or owed thee anything, put that on mine account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.” So Jesus Christ took our sins on His account and paid for them so that brings us forgiveness. But, God wants to be sure that you and I are permanently, morally solvent, that we never go bankrupt again. So He does something else. He not only imputes the sin of Jesus Christ, but He gives us the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ on our account. So when God looks at the ledger of your life, and He sees all of your sins, He sees those sins forgiven. But He also sees the vast riches, spiritual riches, that you have to your account because He sees that you have also the righteousness of Jesus Christ given to you.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For He hath made Him, God made Christ to be sin, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Please notice that it doesn’t say that God made Jesus Christ a sinner. He did not do that. Otherwise He would not have been qualified to carry our sins. It was that God placed upon Him our sins, and He carried them. So here you are, Christian, you are a spiritual billionaire, and yet some of you people are living on spiritual welfare. You have the Holy Spirit who is permanently indwelling you, ready to empower the spiritual Christian, which means the one who has his sins confessed to God. You’ve got the blank check of 1John 1:9, “That if you confess your sins, they’re forgiven.” And you’re fully open to God’s blessing. You have doctrine, and you have a grace system built into your soul that enables you to learn this doctrine. You have promises to claim. You have techniques to live whereby you may live the Christian life. You have prayer provided for access to God, and on and on. What tremendous assets because God has imputed to you the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

**Justification**

Now, this being the case, God as the judge takes another step. This is the second great word to learn this morning. That’s the word “justification.” Imputation is delivering our sins to Christ and placing His righteousness to our account. Now, justification is declaring that the one who has the absolute righteousness of God, which you as a Christian do, are just, that you are absolutely not guilty. Let me give you a little lesson in law this morning. In a court of law, a judge cannot clear a person who is guilty or condemn the person who is innocent and have the ends of justice served. If justice is to be served, you cannot clear somebody who is guilty, nor can you condemn somebody who is not.

There’s an article in the last issue of Life magazine that has an excellent article on legal procedures. One of the things that it points out is this very fact. Sometimes here’s a criminal who has been in jail for waiting trial for 10 months. So the prosecuting attorney and the defense attorney get together and they try to work out a deal so that they won’t have to go to trial. So they may say something of this nature, “The judge will agree to give you a year’s sentence, and will count the 10 months that you’ve been in jail as part of that sentence. With good behavior you will get out in maybe 2 or 3 weeks. And that’s the deal.” The article goes on to point out that sometimes the criminal goes on and says, “Okay, I’ll take it.” Even the defense attorney says, “Now wait a minute. You have to be guilty. You can’t take this plea unless you are actually guilty.” Because you see when the district attorney accepts this arrangement, he has to get up and say something that goes to this effect, “Your honor, the people respectfully recommend acceptance of this plea, feeling that it will provide the court with adequate scope for punishment in the interest of justice.” He must add that phrase so that it is on record that in the view of the representative of this state, who is acting on behalf of the justice of that particular state, that this punishment is considered commensurate to meet the interests of justice. For this reason, some criminal will say, “Well, I’m not guilty, but I’ve been here for 10 months, and I might go to trial, and the jury,” (You know juries can do anything. Lawyers I find hate juries and hate trials by juries because the jury is unpredictable. So they try to avoid the jury like the plague.) The criminal might say, the man may be perfectly innocent, yet say, he may think, “Well if I go to trial and they find me guilty, give me 5 years. I’ll plead guilty. I’ll get out in a few weeks.” They won’t let him do that. He has to actually be guilty, and he has to declare himself guilty before this plea can be accepted in the interest of justice.

Now this is very fascinating, because this is a divine principle. If you’ll turn to Deuteronomy 25 you’ll see where this principle comes from in our legal system. Deuteronomy 25:1, whether the legal system knows it or not, for God says, “Here is the divine rule. If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them. Then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.” You might read this as saying, “They will acquit the righteous, and they will condemn the wicked.” Now when God comes to deal with us in respect to our sins, He has to deal on this exact basis of His own sense of justice. For part of His character is justice. This means that when God deals with the sinner, He has to remain true to this. So He must deal with the facts as they are.

Parents don’t do that with their children because parents love their children. This kid can be a little demon out of you know where, and yet they will excuse him because they love him. Now they don’t do that with other people’s kids. Other people’s kids they’re pretty just with. They dispense the justice pretty accurately, but with their own kids they will excuse. They do not deal in justice. Love comes and dissipates and frustrates this divine rule of dealing in justice. So that what you do, there’s a penalty. You pay it or somebody else pays it. There are some parents who are so accurate in dealing and dispensing justice, that when the child deserves a spanking, and there are loved ones to protect him from that spanking, the father will say, “You will have to spank me.” That’s too good an arrangement to recommend too much, because you might get a kid who will appreciate too much that set up. But the point he’s trying to get across when he does that you see, is somebody pays.

God acts in this same way. Romans 3:26 raises a very difficult problem then in view of this quality of God’s justice and this divine rule of paying the penalty. Romans 3:26 raises the question as to how God can be just and still a justifier of those who do no more than believe on Jesus Christ. Romans 3:26, “Declare I sayeth this time His righteousness, that He might be just and still the justifier of them who believe in Jesus.” God, how can You take a sinner, who is guilty and deserving of hell, and put him into heaven, and You still be faithful to Your own character of justice? Now that’s a very difficult problem. Romans 3:23 summarizes the difficulty, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” If God is going to dispense justice, He has to declare everyone morally guilty because they are. So how can you bring about a condition where it is an actual fact that a man who is a sinner has absolute righteousness, so he can be declared justified? Well God does not legislate a fiction. He does not say that something is so which is not so, anymore than our legal courts are permitted to say that a man is guilty if he is not, or that he is innocent if he is guilty. So God has taken action to remove our moral guilt so that He can give us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Thereby we can become absolutely righteous in God’s eyes, and thereby He can declare us to be justified.

Romans 3:24, “Being justified freely,” and by the way this is a very precious word, this word “freely” in the Greek. This word means “without a cause.” Justified, doted on, justified without a cause. No reason that God should do this. So “being justified, without a cause, by His grace,” that’s how grace acts. “Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation,” you see satisfaction to the justice, “but who faith in His blood to declare His righteousness,” to declare that God is still right, “for the remission or forgiveness of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God,” over all the sins that He ever forgave on credit in the past, even those Christ died for. So God doesn’t legalize a fiction. What He does, He imputes to us on the basis of the death of Christ, the absolute righteousness of God. This is a legal act and it constitutes our standing.

Now a great example of this is the case of Abraham. In Romans 4 you have the review by Paul of the case of Abraham. Here the mechanics of this experience of justification from Abraham’s experience. Remember Abraham’s background? He was the son of Tyra who was a rich man in the city of Ur, a great metropolitan center in Mesopotamia. This was a center of great heathen, idol worship, and of many temples. Now Abraham, therefore, was a prosperous man, but he was ignorant of the true God. Therefore, he lacked absolute righteousness. When Abraham was 75 years old, he met God and God promised him great eternal blessings if he would move out of Ur to a place that God would show him. Genesis 12:1-3 tell you about this. Abraham trusted this God whom he now met, and he moved from Ur to Canaan. God told him that this land would now be his. Genesis 12:4-5 “Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to Him. Lot went with him. Abraham was 75 years old, he departed out of Heron. Abraham took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother, and all their possessions they gathered and all the souls that they had gotten in Heron they went forth into the land of Canaan. Into the land of Canaan they came.”

Now this is the basis why today the Jews do have a right to Palestine. While they have been superseded by squatters from the Arab world for many centuries, the claims to the ownership policy of the land of Palestine is in the hands of the Jews by divine declaration. Now Abraham’s faith in the promises of God made him acceptable with God. Because Genesis 15:6 tells us that because Abraham believed God, because he trusted what God would do for him, he was counted righteous. Genesis 15:6, “He believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Now this is what Paul reviews here in Romans 4. Abraham couldn’t please God, though he was a religious man, but as soon as he believed God, it was counted to him for righteousness. That is it was credited to his account the absolute righteousness of God. Then God was free to bless Abraham and to declare him, justified. This was not a fiction because Abraham had absolute righteousness. Now his works didn’t justify him. His works did justify him as James says, in the eyes of other people, but it was his faith that justified him with God.

Now this imputation of righteousness is what results in justification. God did for Abraham, in this respect, He will do for you. He’ll make you righteous by crediting Christ’s righteousness to your account in His ledger where your page lies. He’ll declare you justified in His sight. God stipulates only one condition for this—that you believe in His Son. Thus receive Him in the work of His Son in your behalf on the cross for your sins. Acts 16:31 says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Then God will exchange as 2 Corinthians 5:21 says God will exchange your sin for the righteousness of Jesus Christ. “For He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

So we commend to you this morning that you abandon your hopeless human righteousness, and you accept that tremendous thing that God has already provided for you. The righteousness of Christ whereby God can declare you just and thereby fit for heaven. In Romans 4:25 we are told that “concerning Jesus Christ who was raised up from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses.” This word “for” in the Greek is the word “dia” and this with the particular form it has here which is the accusative case means “on account of.” It’s very important that you read this verse in that way. We have a song in our hymnbook that gives the wrong idea on the basis of this verse. “Who was delivered on account of our offenses.” And the same for the next phrase, “and He was delivered again for,” that is on account of, “our justification.” Do you know why Christ was raised from the dead? Because God says, “I am perfectly free to justify anybody. I am perfectly free to declare anybody in this room as good as Jesus Christ.” Therefore, God raised His son from the dead because that’s all He wanted to do. The job was done.

**Justification**

There are 7 grand facts in closing that I would like to point out concerning this great truth of justification. First of all, we are justified by God- Romans 8:30, 33. All sin is basically against God. You may offend somebody, you may offend society, you may pay your debt to those people. But this sin that you committed was basically was against God, even if it was against somebody else. That’s why you confess sin to God.

Secondly, we are justified by blood- Romans 3:24, 26. This is the ground of justification. It’s all through the blood of Jesus Christ. That is blood standing for his debt. It’s the death of Jesus Christ in our place- substitution that is the ground that makes justification possible.

Number 3, justification is by faith. Romans 3:28, Romans 4:5, Romans 5:1. Human good works mean absolutely nothing with God because your human good comes from part of your old sin nature, and God rejects everything that comes from the old sin part of man. Thus, there is no way to pay God for the debt of sin—all we do is reject it.

 Number 4 concerning justification, and that is that we are justified by grace. Romans 3:24, the word “freely” means “without a cause.” There’s nothing in us to deserve justification. It was a gracious act of God, and He does it as an expression of His love. There is nothing good, nothing attractive about us to draw this.

A fifth fact about justification is that it is by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:11, the Holy Spirit is the agent who regenerates us, and brings us new birth spiritually. It is the Holy Spirit who places us in Jesus Christ so that being in Him we share His righteousness, and thereby God can declare us to be justified.

Sixth fact about justification is that we are justified by works- whoops! I see all the eyes going up. Justified by works?! That’s what James says. Maybe we ought to look at it. James 2:21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?” Verse 24 of that same chapter, “Ye see then that by works a man is justified not by faith alone, and like man also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers and had sent them out the other way?” You see the book of James is talking about justification in the eyes of men. We are not justified in the eyes of God by our works, but once you are righteous, have the absolute righteousness of God imputed to your account, and you are declared righteous by God, then you prove that to people by your works. So it is true, you are justified by works.

Finally, we are justified in Christ—2 Corinthians 5:21. He is the reason that justification is possible. You and I are made new creations in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:6 tells us that we are accepted “in the beloved.” Now since Jesus Christ cannot be brought to judgment before God for our sins again neither can we. I hope that you will receive the Savior if you have not already done so. I hope that you will make these grand results of justification true in your own life.

Now here’s what results. The summary of the results of justification—Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” A grace that you will never be removed from, so your salvation is secure. Not only so, but we glory in tribulation also. Justification will help you to meet suffering as blessing, knowing that “Tribulation works patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope. And hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us.” You will find a genuine, relaxed mental attitude that God the Holy Spirit will give you which is what the word “love” means. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

So whatever you needed in payment has permanently been done. You have nothing more to worry about concerning your future in your relationship to God and your sin. “Much more than, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” You will never face hell. “For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” God has imputed your sin to Jesus Christ. He has imputed the righteousness of Christ which is absolute righteousness to your account on your ledger page in His book. Because He sees that you have the righteousness of Christ, God has declared to you to be justified. That means that you are just as good as Jesus Christ, and absolutely fit for heaven and fellowship with God. Now to me, that’s pretty exciting news and only God could come up with a solution like that to remove that block that separated us from Himself. If you will believe in this Savior, receive Him as the one who has died for your personal sin, you will come into that blessing. Because remember, until you have accepted yourself, by an act of your own will, this solution that God has provided, it means absolutely nothing. You can sit here this morning and know this tremendous way in which God retained His own justice and yet solved the fact of taking sinners to heaven that he wanted to take there. You can know that tremendous truth and still spend eternity in hell. Unless you personally receive it, it’s just information toward which you have gone negative. Now we’ve given you right information this morning, and if you go positive toward it, it will well up from within your spirit as a great comfort and a great stabilizing and a great orienting force in your life. It will give you direction.

So we pray. “Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for that which thou hast performed, in teaching us the Word this morning. We pray that the Holy Spirit of God would seal to our understanding all that we have heard which is truth. We pray that Thou would enable us to delight as we see this truth taking effect in our lives. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

John E. Danish, 1971