

Justification and the Cross

Testimonies

Pete: A few months after my conversion, I attended a church meeting outside the university where I was studying. The topic was called justification by faith alone. As I walked home in the dark I thought to myself, ‘that it was an interesting teaching that seemed fundamental to our Christian life’. All of a sudden I heard a voice inside me speaking these words, ‘You are righteous!’ I was stunned. This was the first time that I had heard the audible words from God speaking into my spirit. The effect was sudden as it shot through my mind expelling massive amounts of natural thinking and establishing a foundation upon which the rest of my life has been based. Somehow I knew in the depth of my ‘knower’ that I was personally ‘righteous through Christ’. It was like ‘being saved’ or ‘born again’ now made sense. The light bulb had come on. It was not just interesting teaching; now it was personal faith. The supernatural power of God had taken the written word and spoken it audibly into the core of my personality. It was already true about my life before I attended that meeting, but now it was not only written in heaven but in my heart.

Pip: In contrast to Pete’s supernatural experience of being made right by God it took years before this wonderful truth became my reality! It was true for me at the moment of my conversion but grasping this truth and all it meant took a long time. I knew it in my head but I had no assurance in my heart... my feelings did a good job reinforcing I wasn’t good enough because I had not yet received this gift by faith. I didn’t need Satan condemning me as I did a good enough job myself. Then again, perhaps Satan was the one masquerading and working through my unbelief! It is one thing to read the scriptures and have head knowledge but it is a work of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to realise it for ourselves so that the truth is established in the heart... when we ‘see’ something we can’t ‘un-see’ it. My experience of life from childhood was that if I did well I would be loved and when I failed, well the silence was deadly. I was performance driven and when I became a Christian this learned behaviour translated into my relationship with God. So if you struggle to believe the truths below, ask the Lord to make it real to your heart and he will. The cross is powerful to save us – not only to forgive us our sins but also in making us right with God on the basis of Jesus’s behaviour. We stand before the Father not on our merit but in the merit of Jesus; his righteousness is given to us as a gift.

What changes when God declares from heaven that ‘you are righteous’?

The bible uses a word that is important to understand. It is the word ‘atonement’. It means ‘at-one-ment’. In other words when God declares in heaven that ‘you are righteous’ it means you have been made one with God. Unrighteousness had separated you from God. Your unrighteousness has now been taken out of the way so relationally you become one with God.

Hebrews 2:17

‘For this reason He had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.’

Being one with Father God means all that he has is available to you. Whatever your need, he has made provision. Jesus's work on the cross on your behalf has become the only doorway through which your every need can be met.

John 16:14–15

'He (the Holy Spirit) will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.'

To 'declare' can also be understood as to 'make known'. The Holy Spirit wants to make known to you all that is in God's storehouse that is made available to you.

Let's look at some of those things.

1. Not only did he take away your unrighteousness but Jesus gave you his righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21

'For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.'

2. With our unrighteousness put on Jesus, he experienced the rejection of the Father. His rejection by the Father meant that we could be fully accepted by the Father.

Ephesians 1:5-6

'Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved'

3. Because 'you are righteous' you can be totally at peace with God.

Romans 5:1

'Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Ephesians 2:14-17

'...for He Himself is our peace'

4. Being at peace with God opens up free access into his presence.

Romans 5:2

'Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'

5. In his presence we have access into his storehouse for all our needs.

2 Corinthians 9:8

'And God is able to make all grace abound toward you that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.'

Jesus was not poor during his earthly life. He did not have a massive earthly bank account but he had much, much more. He knew how to supernaturally receive on

earth from God's heavenly storehouse. Anyone who can feed 5000 in the wilderness is not poor.

Luke 22:35

'When He sent out the disciples He asked them "did you lack anything" - so they said "Nothing.'"

6. In God's storehouse is the answer for all our physical illnesses.

Matthew 8:16

'When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick.'

Jesus never stopped before a sick person to ask the question 'is there some mysterious plan of God regarding this illness?' He just healed them with the supernatural provision from his Father's storehouse. That said, the bible does outline hindrances in our lives that would prevent God's healing but that is not part of this study.

Many more changes have happened for you. Give yourself time to look at the following.

1. The Holy Spirit entered you - **Ephesians 1:13-14.**
2. You were transferred from the kingdom of the devil to God's Kingdom - **Colossians 1:13.**
3. Spiritually you have a seat next to Christ in heaven – **Ephesians 2:6.**
4. You belong to Christ – **1 John 3:1, Romans 8:16, John 1:12-13.**
5. You have the guarantee of eternal life – **Ephesians 1:13-14.**
6. You have been purchased by God – you are no longer your own – you belong to Christ – **1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**
7. You can become a disciple - someone who is totally submitted to Christ as his God – **Matthew 28:19.**
8. You are an alien of this world – your citizenship is in heaven with God – **Philippians 3:20.**
9. Your eternal destiny is now with God – **I Peter 1:5.**

You will understand from the above just how much has changed through you being 'justified through faith alone'. And Jesus did it all for you on the cross. There is nothing you can add to it by anything you do. There is no need to perform, produce or strive to make yourself acceptable to God. It is on this basis of justification that we now learn how to live out of the goodness of all his provision to us. In the next session we will look at personal transformation from the inside out. This is called sanctification.

Suggested Further Study

Significance and Security