

Wonderful Words of Eternal Life

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May you allow God to guide you in your study of His Holy Word, the Bible.

Justification

Through no merit or power of our own, simply through the cross, we are provided atonement (propitiation) and forgiveness. Can you believe that? WE ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE FORGIVEN AND JUSTIFIED!

- What does it mean to be justified? There are a variety of meanings in the dictionary, but basically it means, “just standing”. It refers to justice. You would be found not guilty, free from condemnation, and innocent. That is the concept of justification.
- Forgiveness remits our debts --- atonement. Forgiveness cancels our liability to punishment --- propitiation. But justification bestows upon us a guilt-free relationship, a right standing before the Almighty God. That's even more incredible.
- How does this come about and what does it mean in our context? The answer to the following questions may help.

What is the source of our justification? If one stands before God, what's the source of their justification? It's the same source as their atonement and propitiation. It's God's grace as stated in Romans. "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23-24) Incidentally, the Greek word for grace is *charis* meaning a gift. I am justified by a gift. That's grace. What gift and where did that gift come from? It's the gift of Jesus. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Romans 5:8-9)

Whose blood? The blood of Jesus on the cross. Since we've been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! We've been saved from wrath, that's propitiation. Now we're justified by that same gift, the blood of Jesus Christ. We are justified by the same source that forgives us. That very same source gives us the right standing before God. Don't ever forget that.

After we've been Christians for a while some may think about all the good life they have lived, the people helped, the services attended, the prayers offered and if they are not careful, they forget the true source of their justification. It's not their works, it's not the services they have attended and not even the prayers they have prayed. There is no way they can earn justification. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that makes them righteous. It is made clear in Romans 3 "For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one;'" (vs. 9-10) and "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (v. 20). You see the source of justification is the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

What does justification mean? "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28) It is not what man does; it is what Christ did! "Man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." (Galatians 2:16)

There's the source out there. How do we tap into that source? What's this means? "For we maintain that a man is justified" (what are the next two words) "by faith apart from observing the law." (Romans 3:28) "Knowing that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ." (Galatians 2:16) "For by grace are you saved through faith." (Ephesians 2:8) What is the means to our justification? What is the connector from us to that source? It is faith. But, what is faith?

God's definition of faith is recorded in the Bible. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). It's being sure of what we hope for, certain of what we cannot see. Faith is an absolute and life-changing trust in what cannot physically be seen. For example, we cannot see God but we see the evidence of his handiwork. In our feeble and finite human mind, we cannot see God; but we know that God exists. Why? Because of the evidence that around us has convinced us without a shadow of a doubt of what we cannot see and that is the existence of God. That's faith.

We did not see Jesus when He was here on earth. We have not seen Him in a vision of any kind, but we are absolutely certain He lived. That He performed the miracles recorded in the Gospels, that He fulfilled prophecy, that He died on that cross, and that He was raised from the tomb. We never saw a bit of that with our eyes, but we know it and that is faith. What the Bible is telling us about the justification is that faith is our connector. Faith is that tiny little part that we control that determines whether or not we tap into that great power source that would not only forgive us, but would justify us. Let's look at the electric light illustration. By turning the wall switch on, the light in the room comes on, dispelling darkness. What's the power source for the light? It's a generator somewhere miles away. Some dynamo plant that's producing electricity, but at our disposal is a switch. If it is turned on, light is produced. If no effort is made to turn it on, no light is produced. Regardless of the power source, regardless about how strong the power is, unless we choose to connect to the

power by turning the switch on, we do not get the advantage of the light. Faith is our connector that allows us to be justified but we must turn it on.

Faith is a life-changing trust. It has its conception when you hear about Jesus Christ, who he is, and what he's done. The Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. That's when the conception starts. Then that belief grows until it leads us to repentance. That is changing our lifestyle. Faith, real faith, leads us to turn. It won't let us stay where we are. That repentance will lead us to a new birth. In Ephesians 1:13, Paul says, you believed after you heard the word of truth. Peter said in Acts 2:38 to the crowd that was listening to him, "Repent." Paul said in Acts 20:21, to the Christians at Ephesus, don't you remember I preached to you the message of repentance. Genuine repentance results in a change, a death of the old life. However, that trust leads to obedience. We bury the dead old self by a rebirth, baptism, calling on God to forgive and are resurrected to a new life in Christ (Titus 3:5; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27) and from that birth, faith grows in our life until faith is our life.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17) Faith is life-changing, a life-changing trust. Just acknowledging that God exists does not produce faith much less works and James 2:26 states faith without works is dead. It's not that faith is works, but genuine faith will produce works. That absolute life-changing trust connects us to the almighty source of justification.

What about the effects of justification? We are Christians, having been forgiven, being justified, and standing in a righteous relationship before God. What about the effects of this righteous standing? First, all human status is really done away; race, nationality, gender, financial worth, and position among men. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29) If you have been justified in the sight of God, do not worry about being justified in the sight of man or what man thinks. Just be concerned about what God thinks.

Secondly, you can approach the Almighty God freely and boldly and now! Prayer to the Almighty God is a privilege. It's a privilege that you accept when justified by the blood of Jesus through faith. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) If it were just mercy, we would be cowering in the presence of God but we have been justified. Now, God says, you can approach the throne of grace with confidence. We're talking about the Almighty God who put into this universe at least one trillion galaxies, one of which is the Milky Way, our galaxy. There are over one billion stars and around one of those little stars, there is a solar system with nine planets and on one of those nine planets, there are over five billion people and every human is just one of them. We are sinners who can boldly approach God Almighty. That's the effect of justification.

Lastly you can stand before God on Judgment Day without fear. The scariest words that some people may hear are "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) Those who are obedient and therefore justified have comfort in the following: "the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us." (1 John 1:2) "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34) and "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25) One of these days we will stand before the throne of God. Will we be ready? Will we be JUSTIFIED?

1 John 2:1, "My little children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense..." Romans 8:34, "Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died ... more than that, who was raised to life ... is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." Hebrews 7:25, "he is able to save completely (listen to that) those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

Revelation 3:5 says, he who overcomes will be dressed in white, for they're worthy. One of these days we will stand before the throne of God. I hope we will be given a white robe. Not because we are clean, but because we have totally and faithfully trusted in the one who would make us clean and allow us to stand before the Almighty God. What else could we ask for? What could possibly be better in this universe?

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