

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF
FAITH
XI. OF JUSTIFICATION

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

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I. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE

Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

I. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE

- The Golden Chain: “those whom he *predestined* he also *called*, and those whom he called he also *justified*” (Rom. 8:30).
- Not by Infusing Righteousness
 - “Infused Righteousness” is the Roman Catholic doctrine that a) assumes that God justifies only those who have *become* fully righteous; and b) teaches that God’s grace through the sacraments increasingly *makes* us righteous.
 - Since few (if any) can be said to be perfectly righteous in this life, infused righteousness leads to the Roman doctrine of purgatory.
 - Contrary to the “infused righteousness” doctrine, Romans 4:5 teaches that God “justifies the ungodly.”
- But Pardoning their Sins
 - “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them” (2 Cor. 5:19).
 - “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34).
 - “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 Jn. 1:9).

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- Accounting them Righteous: God's *Declaration* (declared, not made).
 - Not by their Works
 - “we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 2:16).
 - “Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness” (Rom. 4:4-5).
 - “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy” (Tit. 3:5).
 - “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (Isa. 64:6).
 - For Christ's Sake.
 - “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith” (Rom. 3:23-25).
 - “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19).
 - “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins” (Eph. 1:7).

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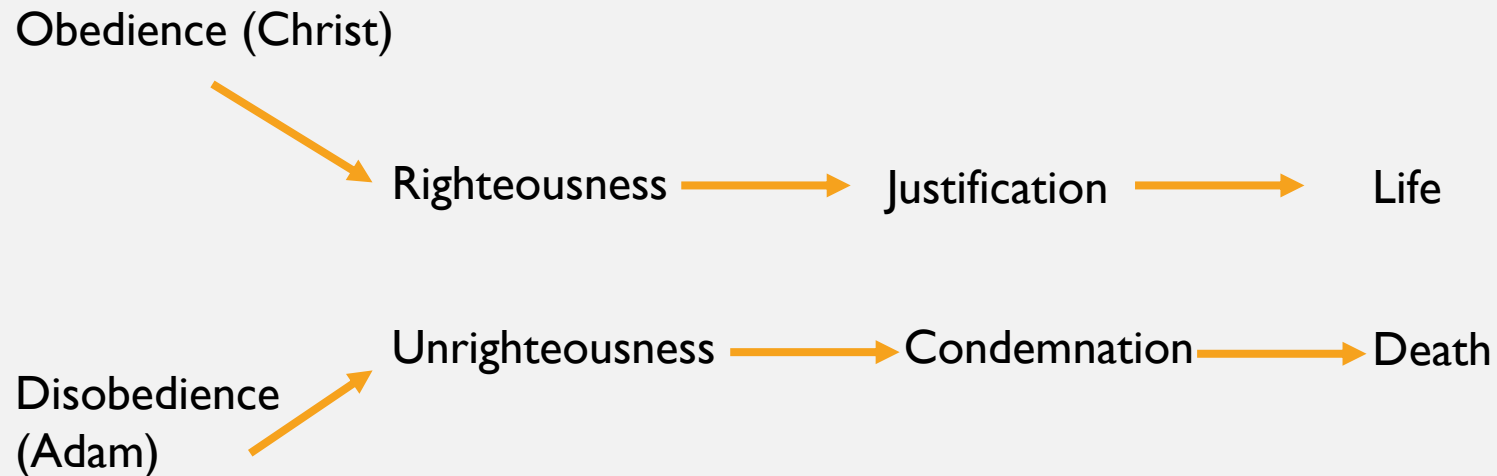
- Not by Imputing Faith itself, the act of believing, as their righteousness
 - We are not justified *because* we believed.
 - The teaching that works (OT) was too hard, so God in his grace allows us to be justified by believing (NT) is *wrong*. Justification is *not* a *reward* for believing, but an act of grace.
 - Faith is *not* easier, but is impossible to unregenerate man (Jn. 6:44; I Cor. 2:14).
 - Faith is, instead, the sole *instrument* of our justification.
- But by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness
 - Imputation means to "account" (*logizomai*).
 - "And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).
 - Imputation means that we are justified by Christ's work for us, which is credited to our account
 - "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).

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- Our Sins Imputed to Christ
 - “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).
 - “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21).
- Christ’s Obedience Imputed.
 - Adam in the covenant of works was a “type of the one to come” (Rom. 5:14).
 - “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18-19).
- Christ’s Satisfaction (of God’s Justice) Imputed
 - “having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross” (Col. 2:13-14).
 - “Paid in Full!” (Jn. 19:30).
- The Great Exchange: *Double Imputation!*

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- Justification in Romans 5:18-19
 - “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”



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- Justification *through* faith
 - Receiving Christ as Savior
 - Resting on Christ as our Righteousness
 - “and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Phil. 3:9).
- Justification *by* Grace
 - “Which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God” (WCF 11:1).
 - “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).
 - “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace” (Rom. 4:16).

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- Resting on What God Has Done for Us
 - “The justified person is the one who has ceased trying to please God by his own efforts and who has turned to Jesus instead for the righteousness that God gives freely. This is what it means to be a Christian. It means to stop trying to attain heaven by our own good works and instead to receive what God has done for us in Christ. The foundation of our Christian life is not what we can do for God but what God has done for us. Therefore, the entrance into that life is not by working but by receiving. It is opening our hands to God's gifts.” (James Montgomery Boice: *The Minor Prophets*, vol. 2, p. 92).
 - “Few know enough to start each day with a thoroughgoing stand upon Luther’s platform: *you are accepted*, looking outward in faith and claiming the wholly alien righteousness of Christ as the only ground for acceptance, relaxing in that quality of trust which will produce increasing sanctification as faith is active in love and gratitude.” (Richard F. Lovelace: *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, p. 101).

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- A Justified Sinner
 - “I know and am fully assured that I am justified by faith in Christ Jesus. I am treated as if I had been perfectly just and made an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. And yet by nature I must take my place among the most sinful. I, though altogether undeserving, am treated as if I had been deserving, am treated as if I had been deserving. I am loved with as much love as if I had always been godly, whereas before I was ungodly. Who can help being astonished at this? Gratitude for such favor stands dressed in robes of wonder.” (Charles H. Spurgeon: *All of Grace*, pp. 11-12).
 - It is entirely by the intervention of Christ’s righteousness that we obtain justification before God. This is equivalent to saying that man is not just in himself, but that the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation, while he is strictly deserving of punishment. (John Calvin, c.f. R.C. Sproul: *Faith Alone*, p. 93).

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Implications of Justification through Faith Alone

- Saved and Forever Safe
 - You may (and will) be more *holy* in the future. But you will never be more *righteous* in all eternity than you are right now through faith in Christ and through his imputed perfect righteousness.
- A Faith that Never Is Alone
 - “You do not live a good life in order to get it. You live a good life in order to thank him for giving it.” (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Love So Amazing*, 103).