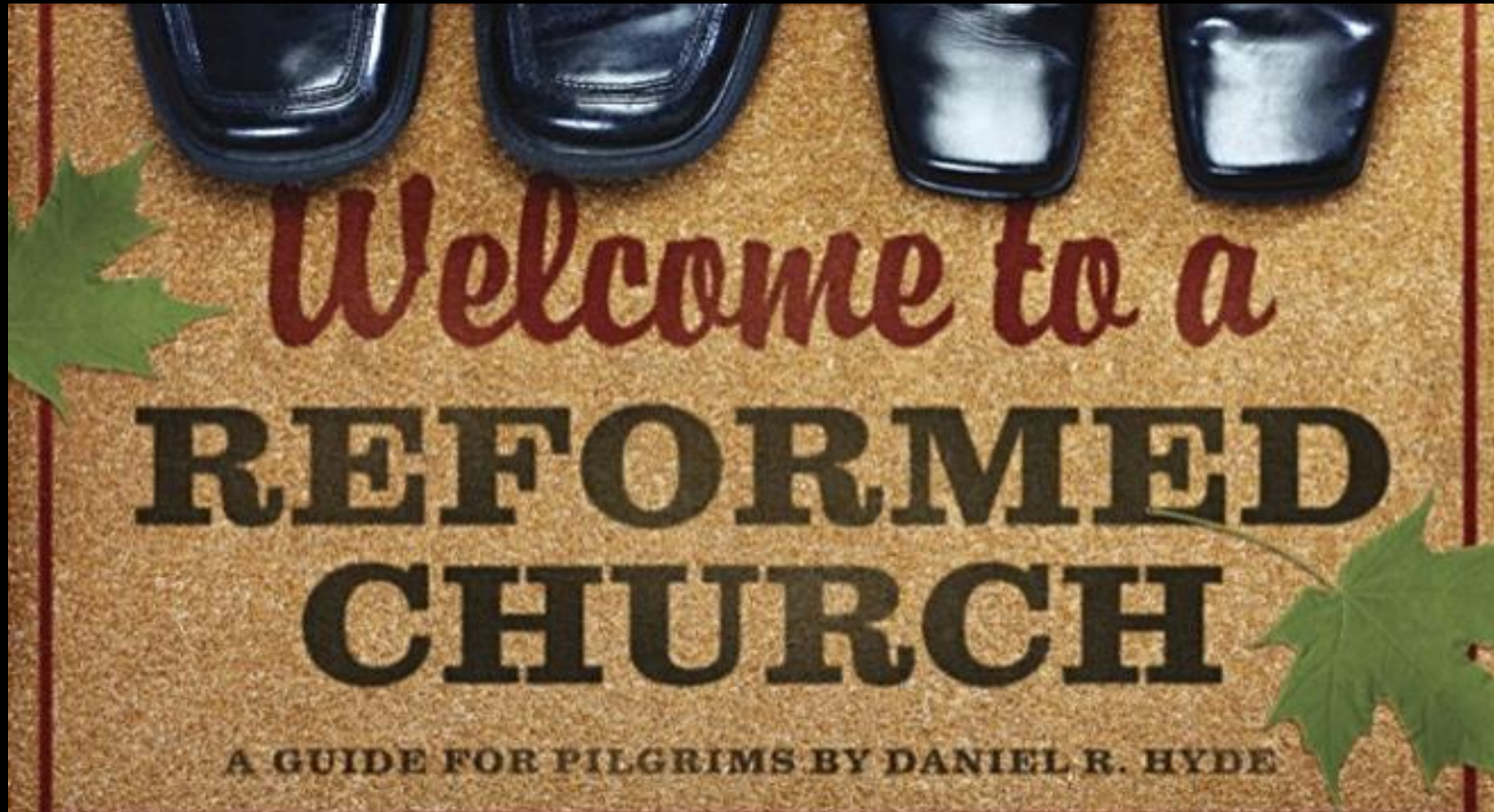


# Welcome to a Reformed Church

A Guide For Pilgrims



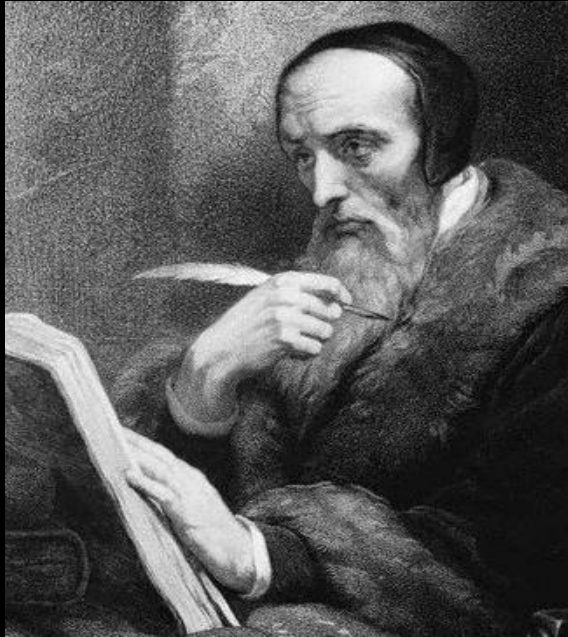
“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— Philippians 3: 8-9

# Justification: Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone

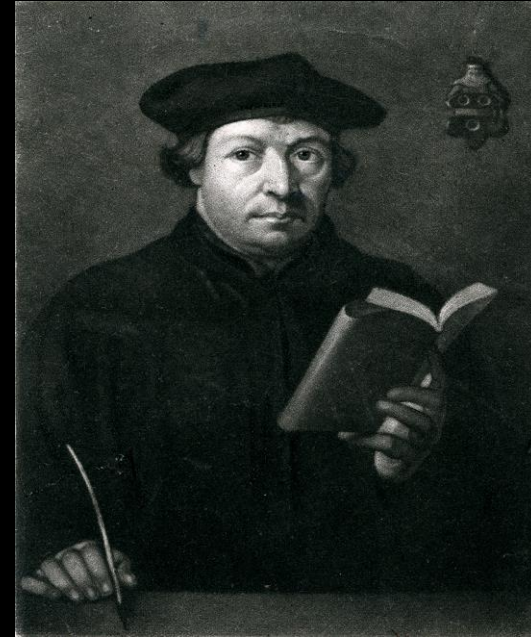


1. The Weakness of the Law
2. What Is Justification
3. Grace Alone
4. Faith Alone
5. Christ Alone
  - Active Obedience
  - Passive Obedience
  - Satisfaction
  - Imputation

# Justification



“...main hinge on which religion turns.”



“...the article by which the Church stands or falls.”



# Our Dilemma



“Will all great Neptune’s ocean  
wash this blood clean from my  
hand? No, this my hand will rather  
the multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
making the green one red...”

- Shakespeare,  
Macbeth, 2.2.59-62

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

- Romans 3:23

“You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”.

- Matthew 5:48

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?”

- 1 Corinthians 6:9

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

– Romans 1:18



“The biblical frame of reference, within which alone justification can be understood ... is created, said the Reformers, by two realities:

- **human sin**, which is universal, and
- **divine judgment**, which is inescapable.”



# 1. The Weakness of the Law

“Whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin”

- Rom. 3:19–20

# 1. The Weakness of the Law

“For though it discovers the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof, yet as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from misery, and thus being weak through the flesh leaves the transgressor under the curse, man cannot by this law obtain saving grace”

Canons of Dort, 3 /4.5

## 2. Justification

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 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. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

- Romans 3: 21-26

How are you Righteous before God ?



“Only by true faith in Jesus Christ; that is, although my conscience accuse me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and am still prone always to all evil; yet God without any merit of mine, of mere **grace**, grants and **imputes** to me the **perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ**, as if I had never committed nor had any sin, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me; if only I accept such benefit with a **believing heart.**” (Heidelberg Catechism Q/A60)

# What is Justification?

δικαίωσις  
dikaiósis

“the act of pronouncing  
righteous, acquittal”

Usage: acquittal,  
justifying, justification,  
a process of absolution.

“But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our **justification**. –Romans 4:23-25 ESV

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to **justification** and life for all men.” –Romans 5:18  
ESV

# What is Justification?

Q. 70. What is justification?



Justification is an **act** of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he **pardons all their sins**, accepts and **accounts** their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the **perfect obedience** and full **satisfaction of Christ**, by God **imputed** to them, and **received by faith alone**.

WCF (Larger Catechism)



## Justification

- A **one-time act** whereby God **declares** a sinner to be not only not guilty but **perfectly righteous**.
- The basis for the divine declaration is the doing and dying of Christ. God credits (or imputes) us with the righteousness (merit) of Jesus.
- We are justified by grace (a gift) through faith (trusting in Jesus). See: Rom. 3.24; 4.1-5; 5.1; 2 Cor. 5.21, Tit. 3.7.

## Sanctification

- The **continual process** of being made more holy.
- It is the progressive conformity of the one who has been justified into the image of their Savior through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Like justification, sanctification is a work of grace through faith, made possible because of the finished work of Christ on our behalf. See: Rom. 6; 8; Tit. 3.5; 1 Thess. 4.3, 5.23; Heb. 12.14; 2 Pet. 3.18; Jud. 1.20.

# Justification the Opposite of Condemnation



- To “condemn” is to pronounce guilty or worthy of punishment.
- To “justify” is to declare not guilty, or that justice does not demand punishment, or that the person concerned cannot justly be condemned.
- Against the elect in Christ no ground of condemnation can be presented. God pronounces them just, and therefore no one can pronounce them guilty.

- “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- Rom 8:1

- “Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

- Rom. 8:33, 34

# What is Justification? (i.e. The meaning of Justification)

- “To declare righteous.” (This is more than acquittal)
- “Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner.”
- “In justification a person is not made righteous, but declared righteous.” \* (“simul justus et peccator”)



# 3. Grace Alone

- How art thou righteous before God?



- Answer: Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; so that, though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil; notwithstanding, God, without any merit of mine, **but only of mere grace**, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me, inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart.

- Heidelberg Catechism Question 60

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—**by grace you have been saved...**”  
- Eph. 2: 4-5

“**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

“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,”  
-Rom. 3: 23-24

“ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, **not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace**, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,”

-2 Timothy 1:8-10 ESV



# 4. Faith Alone



“We believe that  
for us to acquire the true knowledge of this great  
mystery  
the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith  
that embraces Jesus Christ,  
with all his merits,  
and makes him its own,  
and no longer looks for anything  
apart from him.”

- Article 22: The Righteousness of Faith  
(Belgic Confession of Faith)

# 4. Faith Alone

## Canons of Dort 3/14



“In this way, therefore, **faith is a gift of God**, not in the sense that it is offered by God for people to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on them, **breathed and infused into them**. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent—the act of believing—by human choice; rather, **it is a gift in the sense that God who works both willing and acting and, indeed, works all things in all people and produces in them both the will to believe and the belief itself.**”

# Without Works

And therefore we justly say with Paul that we are justified “by faith alone” or “**by faith apart from works.**”

However, we do not mean, properly speaking, that it is faith itself that justifies us—**for faith is only the instrument by which embrace Christ**, our righteousness.

But Jesus Christ is our righteousness in making available to us all his merits

and all the holy works he has done for us and in our place **And faith is the instrument that keeps us in communion with him and with all his benefits.** When those benefits are made ours, they are more than enough to absolve us of our sins.

- Belgic Confession (Article 22)

# Without Works



Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, **is the alone instrument of justification**; and yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

- WCF 11,II.

“Given the meaning of "by faith" in the original Greek, it is more accurate to speak of faith as an **instrument rather than a condition of justification and salvation**, for a condition generally denotes a meritorious quality for the sake of which a benefit is conferred. We are justified not merely by faith, but by **faith in Christ**; not because of what faith is, but because of what faith lays hold of and receives. We are not saved for believing but by believing.”

-Joel Beeke, Justification by Faith Alone:  
The Relation of Faith to Justification



## 5. Christ Alone



Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only?

Answer: Not that I am acceptable to God, on account of the worthiness of my faith, but because only the **satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ**, is my righteousness before God; and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only.

- Heidelberg Catechism: Question 61



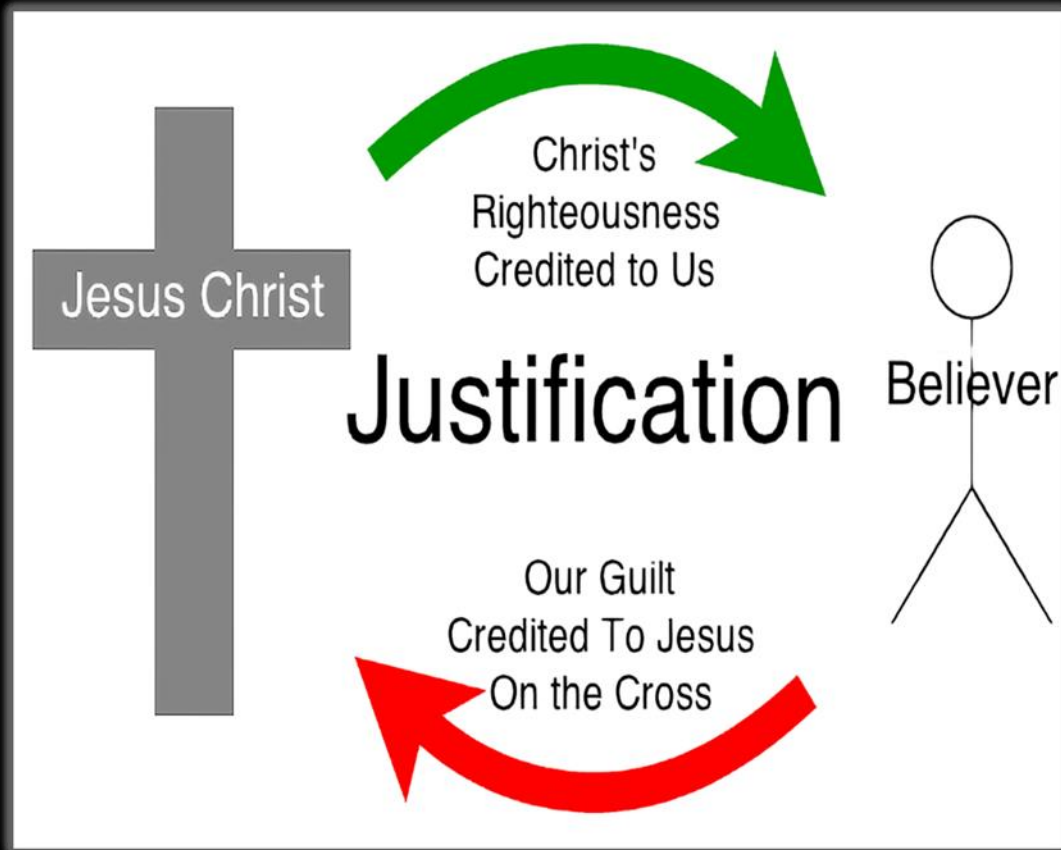
## Active Obedience

- Christ's full obedience to all the prescriptions of the divine law...[making] available a perfect righteousness before the law that is imputed or reckoned to those who put their trust in him

## Passive Obedience

- Christ's willing obedience in bearing all the sanctions imposed by that law against his people because of their transgression...[being] the ground of God's justification of sinners (Rom. 5:9), by which divine act they are pardoned..."

# Double Imputation



“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” - 1 Cor. 5:21

## Q. 70. What is justification?



Justification is an **act** of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he **pardons all their sins**, accepts and **accounts** their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the **perfect obedience** and full **satisfaction of Christ**, by God **imputed** to them, and **received by faith alone**.

WCF (Larger Catechism)

# Imputation

λογίζομαι  
logizomai

“to take into account, to consider, to count, to reckon, to number: metaphorically, to pass to one's account, to impute (A.V. reckon)”

“What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was **counted** to him as righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his wages are not **counted** as a gift but as his due. <sup>5</sup> And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is **counted** as righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God **counts** righteousness apart from works:

## Imputation

λογίζομαι  
logizomai

“to take into account, to consider,  
to count, to reckon:  
metaphorically, to pass to one's  
account, to impute (A. V.  
reckon)”

7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,

and whose sins are covered;

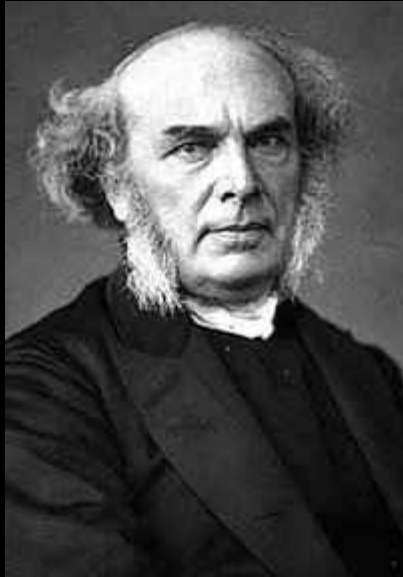
8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not **count** his sin.”

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was **counted** to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it **counted** to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that

he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be **counted** to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”

—Romans 4: 1-12

# Here, O my Lord, I See Thee Face to Face



“Mine is the sin, but thine the righteousness;  
mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing Blood.  
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace;  
thy Blood, thy righteousness, O Lord, my  
God!”

- Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889