

# Soteriology 101

## Week 10 – Justification and Adoption



**Justification:** The instantaneous act of God whereby, as a gift of His grace, He **imputes** to believing sinners the full and perfect righteousness of Christ through faith alone and legally **declares** them perfectly **righteous** in His sight, forgiving them of all unrighteousness and thus delivering them from all condemnation. (Matthew 5:20, 5:48)

1. Salvation is a matter of **righteousness**. (Romans 1:16-17, 10:3-4; Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:21-28)

*“It is necessary to understand that salvation is a matter of righteousness. People are condemned to eternal spiritual death because they lack the righteousness that a perfectly holy God possesses and requires for fellowship with Him. And the only way sinners are ever reconciled to God is by being given the righteousness that belongs to God Himself.” – MacArthur and Mayhue*

2. The nature of justification: a **legal** declaration. (Romans 8:33-34)

*“Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what a judge does – he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status.” – John Murray*

3. The ground of justification: **imputed** righteousness. (Romans 4:5)



**Imputation:** The sin of believers is **reckoned** to Christ, who bears its penalty on the cross, while Christ's righteousness is **credited** to believers, granting them a standing of justification before God.

- a) Imputation of our sin to Christ **➡** **forgiveness** of sins.  
(2 Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 53:6, 1 Peter 2:24, Romans 4:7-8)
- b) Imputation of Christ's righteousness to us **➡** provision of **righteousness**.  
(Isaiah 61:10, Genesis 15:6, Romans 5:18-19)
- c) Impact of imputation:
  - No condemnation. (Romans 8:1)
  - Peace with God. (Romans 5:1)
  - Eternal life. (Romans 8:30)

4. The means of justification: **faith** alone.


(Romans 9:30, 10:6,10; Galatians 2:16; John 5:24; Luke 18:14; Romans 3:24, 4:16, 11:6)

*“Faith stands in antithesis to works; there can be no amalgam of these two. That we are justified by faith is what engenders hope in a convicted sinner's heart. He knows he has nothing to offer.” – John Murray*

*“Righteousness cannot be based on my faith without that righteousness becoming ‘a righteousness of my own’ (Phil. 3:9). If saving righteousness is grounded on the sinner doing anything – even believing – it is no longer an alien righteousness given as a gift and therefore cannot be the righteousness of God required for salvation.” – MacArthur and Mayhue*

5. The result of justification: good **works**. (James 2:24, Luke 10:29, Eph. 2:8-10, Titus 2:14, Rom. 6:22)

*“No one has entrusted himself to Christ for deliverance from the guilt of sin who has not also entrusted himself to Him for deliverance from the power of sin.” – John Murray*

 **Adoption:** God legally places regenerated and justified sinners into His **family**, so that they become sons and daughters of God and thus enjoy all the **rights** and **privileges** of one who is a member of God’s eternal family. (Ephesians 1:4-6)

*“At great cost to Himself, God took every legal measure to rescue us from sin and make us part of His family. As planned in eternity past, the Son purchased believers on Calvary, and they finally lay hold of the blessing of adoption at the time of conversion.” – MacArthur and Mayhue*

Comparing adoption to regeneration:

1. Regeneration is a work of the Spirit; adoption is an act of the **Father**. (John 6:63, Ephesians 1:5)
2. Regeneration is transformative; adoption is **declarative**. (2 Corinthians 5:17, John 1:12)
3. Regeneration is mediated by the word of God; adoption is obtained through **faith** in Christ. (James 1:18, Galatians 3:26)

Privileges of adoption:

1. The Holy Spirit **resides** in the believer’s heart. (Galatians 4:6-7)
2. God delights to **bless** His children. (Psalm 103:13, Luke 11:11-13)
3. Believers can approach God in **prayer**. (Matthew 7:11, Luke 12:30)
4. Believers receive the loving, fatherly **discipline** of God. (Hebrews 12:5-6, 10)
5. Believers enjoy **unity** with each other. (Ephesians 4:3)
6. Believers grow in **sanctification**. (Ephesians 5:1)
7. Believers share in the future inheritance of **eternal life**. (Gal. 4:7, Rom. 8:17, 1 Peter 1:4, Phil. 3:21)

### **Takeaways**

1. Be humbled by the truth of God’s justification.
2. Avoid both legalism and antinomianism.
3. Live in light of your eternal inheritance.
4. Seek unity within the church.