

# The Gospel in Terms of Discipleship

Faith Without Works is Dead

# Crucial Questions

- “How can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?” (Job 25:4)
- The Protestant Reformers, including Luther (1517) and Calvin clarified that people are justified by faith
- “For in the gospel the righteousness (justification) of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: **The righteous will live by faith**” (Rom 1:17)
- But what does justification by faith mean?
- Just believe? What is the place of obedience (discipleship), if any, in the Christian life?
- The Roman Catholic Church pushed back in the Council of Trent, an ecumenical council convened between 1545-1563 to formally reject Protestant doctrines

# Luther on Rom 1:17

- Luther pondered Rom 1:17, which linked the justice (or righteousness) of God to the gospel
- Luther described his agony and his discovery this way: “Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteousness of God who punishes sinner... Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which, through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us through faith. Then I felt myself reborn... This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven”

# Luther on Rom 1:17

- Luther asked, “What does this mean that “The righteous will live by faith?”
- Up until this time, Luther was reading the Latin translation of Rom 1:17. The Latin word for “justification” used at that time in church history was the term *justificare*, which means “to make righteous.” For Luther, the Augustinian monk, and the Latin Church Fathers, that means justification is what happens when God, through the sacraments of the church, makes unrighteous people righteous.
- But Luther was now reading the Greek text, where the term *dikaioisune* means “to declare” as righteous for those who believe in the gospel. That means one is not saved by his or her own righteousness but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Luther exclaimed, “When I discovered that, I was born again of the Holy Ghost. And the doors of paradise swung open, and I walked through.” Praise be to God!

# Council of Trent, 1563

- **Canon 9:** “If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone,... let him be anathema.”
- **Canon 11:** “If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sin,... let him be anathema.”
- **Canon 12:** “If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.”

# Council of Trent, 1563

- **Canon 24:** “If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of the increase, let him be anathema.”
- **Canon 30:** “If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema.”

# Justification and Sanctification in Rom 6

- <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus
- With the image of being united with Christ (v. 5), we see the vital connection between justification (**declared righteous**) and sanctification (**become more holy**) because believers are “dead to sin but alive to God” (v. 11)

# Justification and Sanctification in Rom 8

- How is it possible that Christians can become more like Jesus?
- Rom 8: We now have the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of our union with Christ (vv. 1-2)
  - The Spirit indwells believers (v. 9), and
  - “Christ is in you” (v. 10), so believers call out to
  - God as “Abba Father” or as adopted children of God (vv. 15-16)
- Rom 8: Remission of sin cannot be separated from the Spirit of sanctification



# A Comparison

## **JUSTIFICATION**

- Being declared righteous happens outside of you
- A one-time event
- Positional righteousness

## **SANCTIFICATION**

- Being made righteous which happens inside of you
- A continual process
- Practical conformity to Christlikeness

# Justification

- God imputes an alien righteousness to us through faith alone
- The Westminster Standards state the faith that justifies is never alone but it is accompanied by works
- How is justification different from sanctification?
- Are they both necessary for salvation?
- The Bible states that there is a holiness without which we cannot see the Lord
- There are attitudes and behaviors, if we persist in them, will send us to hell

# Sanctification

- We are saved by grace through faith alone, but not by a faith which remains alone
- In other words, we are saved by faith, not by how sanctified we are
- But if we are not getting sanctified, then we don't have saving faith
- Sanctification is the ***fruit*** of salvation, not the ***root*** or the cause of salvation
- James says if your faith is not producing a change, it is not real saving faith

# Conclusion

- Faith is the instrument by which we receive God's grace, which is unmerited favor from God. We are justified by faith
- Our sanctification—the determination to obey God's truth, commands, repentance, or commitment to live a new life—none of these has anything to do with our justification
- They are simply the inevitable fruits of justification
- Discipleship is given to and required of all the justified, but it is not itself the good news in which we place our trust and hope
- “You're really saved by grace through faith, not by how sanctified you are. But if you're not getting sanctified, then you don't have saving faith. Sanctification is the sign of salvation, but not the cause” (Keller, 2012)

# Discussion Questions

- What are some common misconceptions Christians have about the relationship between justification and sanctification?
- What new motivations and resources do genuine Christians have in our discipleship of following and becoming more like Christ?