

“His Faith is Accounted for Righteousness”

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Introduction: Upon what basis will we stand righteous before God?

- A. This is a question that we must know clearly. **(Rom 1:16-17)**
 - 1. Often I have found Christians lacking here. (Example: A Baptist may ask you why you why you will go to heaven, how will you respond?)
 - 2. Recently I have heard of several Christians who fell away because they believe “churches of Christ are a legalistic group that preaches a different gospel.” In one case a gospel preacher proclaimed that he had preached for 25 years without understanding the grace of God!
 - 3. Those who fail to understand will often be burdened by the guilt of their sin, they cannot find assurance. **(Acts 13:38-39)**
- B. The foundation of our justification is the cross of Christ. **(Col 1:19-22)**
 - 1. In the cross we see that Jesus paid the price for our sins. **(2 Cor 5:20-21)**
 - 2. We cannot add to the work of Christ accomplished on the cross! This was a “once for all” event. **(Heb 9:26-28)**
 - 3. Still, how does a man find this righteousness that comes through the death of Christ?

I. What is Justification?

- A. The root ideal is “to put right with”. - Friberg Lexicon
 - 1. The various meanings of this word are: (a) to put right with (b) show to be right (c) acquit (d) set free (e) obey righteous commands. (Louw-Nida Lexicon.)
 - 2. This is a term that is common to the courtroom.
- B. How can a man be just before God?
 - 1. Any man who sees the true God will be terrified at his own sinfulness. **(Isa 6:1-7)**
 - 2. God in His righteousness must punish every sin that has been committed. **(Rom 3:23)**
 - 3. How then can a man be righteous? He is proclaimed righteous through the blood of Christ. **(Rom 3:24-26)**
 - 4. The other “possibility” is that a man keep all of the law of God without sin. Only Jesus has done that! Those who try to be right with God on this basis will fail. **(Rom 3:27-28)**
 - 5. The issue before every man is “Am I forgiven by the blood of Christ?”
- C. Upon what basis can I find this justification?
 - 1. It is either conditional (there is something we must do) or unconditional (All men will be saved).
 - 2. God has chosen that men will be saved conditionally. The condition of our salvation is faith. **(Rom 3:26-27, 29-31; Eph 2:8-9)**
 - 3. This “law of faith” is contrasted with “the deeds of the law”. These are

two contrary approaches to God.

- a. Those who seek to be justified by law must constantly ask: “How much is enough?” The truth is they can never “do enough.”
 - b. There is a bondage to those who seek to be right with God by law alone. **(Rom 7:14, 23-8:1)**
 - c. One of the reasons God gave the Old Law was to prepare men for a Saviour. **(Gal 3:21-25)**
 - d. When Christians turn back to a system of law for their justification, they will be lost. **(Gal 2:21-3:4)**
4. God accounts our faith for righteousness. **(Rom 4:1-8)**
- a. This is an accounting term. What God sees is our faith and upon that basis “faith is accounted for righteousness.”
 - b. But what is faith as used in these verses?

II. What kind of Faith Justifies?

A. What if faith?

1. It can be simply an intellectual assent. **(Jn 12:42; Jas 2:14-19)**
2. It also denotes a trust that is willing to commit. **(John 3:16)**

B. When does faith justify?

1. Many when they see that “we are justified by faith” conclude that forgiveness comes at the moment one believes. This is not true.
2. God has chosen to save one “by grace through faith” after (a) repentance **(Acts 2:38)** b. Confession **(Rom 10:9-10)** c. And baptism. **(Col 2:11-13)**
3. A Christian continues to be forgiven as he “walks by faith.” This includes his faith meeting the conditions of repentance and prayer. **(Acts 8:22; 1 Jn 1:7-9)**

C. The example of Abraham.

1. Was this the conversion of Abraham? No. **(Rom 4:3-4, 9; Gen 15:6)**
2. Abraham already had this justifying faith. **(Gen 12:1; Heb 11:8)**
3. The truth is that our faith keeps justifying us as we walk in the light. This was true of Abraham. **(Jas 2:21-24)**
4. What kind of faith saves? It is the faith of Abraham! **(Rom 4:11-12)**
5. Can one be lost after becoming a Christian? Yes, they cease to have this saving faith. How will I know this? When I refuse to repent! **(1 Jn 1:6)**

III. What does this mean to me?

A. I can have assurance with God about my standing with Him. **(Rom 8:1-4)**

B. My heart will be characterized by mercy and grace and joy. **(Rom 5:2; Eph 4:31-32)**

C. I will search the law of God and gladly keep what I find, even through I may struggle. **(Acts 20:32)**

Conclusion: What kind of faith do you have?

A. Some who proclaim salvation by faith the loudest can be some of the meanest people I know. They are deceived by their pride that they have faith.

B. The test of a living faith is our works! (**2 Cor 6:1, 14-18**)