

Doctrine 70 & 71: Justification

This is Part 5: Redemption | Doctrine 25 & 26: Justification

From the 99 Essentials Booklet

70-Justification By Faith

Justification refers to the moment when a person is objectively declared righteous before God based on the righteousness of Christ's atoning death (Rom. 8:33-34). This act of declaration takes place through faith in Christ and not as a result of human works or effort (Eph. 2:8-9). Through justification, a person is made to be in right standing before God, changing what was once an estranged and hostile relationship to one of adoption into the family of God.

71-Justification And Works

Justification is not the result of human effort or good works but through faith in the righteousness of Christ. Although good works do not lead to justification, justification leads to good works in the life of a believer (Eph. 2:10). Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17). While good works do not establish justification, they do verify a genuine faith and make our justification evident to others.

From the Bible

Romans 8:33–34 (NKJV)

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Romans 3:21–26 (NKJV)

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

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

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:28 (NKJV)

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Romans 5:18 (NKJV)

18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)

16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Romans 4:1–5 (NKJV)

1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

James 2:17–24 (NKJV)

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Key Thoughts

- God is the Judge
- Jesus is both our sacrifice and our intercessor
- Because Jesus took the punishment for sin, God is just in extending mercy to us
- Justification is available to all but applied only to those who place their faith in Christ
- Abraham demonstrates that justification comes through faith
- Abraham demonstrates that justification is seen through good works

Additional Thought

The apparent contradiction between Paul in Romans and James in James is resolved with a small amount of grammar.

A. Nouns.

1. dikaios (δικαίως, 1347) denotes "the act of pronouncing righteous, justification, acquittal"; its precise meaning is determined by that of the verb dikao, "to justify" (see B); it is used twice in the Ep. to the Romans, and there alone in the NT, signifying the establishment of a person as just by acquittal from guilt.

B. Verb.

dikao (δικαίω, 1344) primarily "to deem to be right," signifies, in the NT, (a) "to show to be right or righteous"

Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). In Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 2, p. 339). T. Nelson.