

Redemption in Romans Lesson 5 3Q 2010

Justification and the Law

But before we go into this week's lesson, there were a couple of points I wanted to follow up on from last week.

I wanted to follow up on the idea that justification is God declaring something to be so.

Does God declare things to be which are not? Is God's declaration what makes it so? As someone asked, is it when God speaks and it exists?

If God's declaration is what makes one righteous then why doesn't He just declare everyone righteous? Or stated another way, if justification is God declaring someone to be righteous why doesn't God declare everyone righteous and thereby justify everyone?

Can a person be legally right with God while their heart is still unchanged toward God?

How do we understand the declarative aspects of justification?

When Jesus was on earth and declared that the leaders were of their father the devil – was it so, or was Jesus declaring something that was not so? What caused them to be of their father the devil? Jesus' declaration or something that they had chosen?

At the end of time when the wicked are declared to be filthy still and the righteous are declared to be righteous still – will it actually be that way? Will the declaration cause it to be that way?

Is this an example of how we understand the declarative aspects of justification by faith? Does God declare us to be righteous when we are not? Does His declaration make it so, or after God has set us right with Him (justified us) does He also declare the reality if that change?

In the penal model what is emphasized as necessary for our justification? Is it not having our legal penalty paid? Is it not claimed that Christ's death paid the penalty to justify us?

But our model suggests that focusing on a penalty paid misdirects our attention from God's true plan. In other words we suggest that mere blood payment for sin was insufficient to justify us because we didn't need mere legal pardon we need restoration to righteousness in order to be right with God again. With that in mind, what do you think about Romans 4:25 in this regard?

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

What does it mean? Delivered over is the same Greek as Romans 1:24, 26, 28 when God "let go" sinners to experience their choice. Christ was let go for our sin, what does this mean? It was for the purpose of destroying the infection of selfishness, the carnal nature, our sinfulness, that he was delivered over to death. Yet He was raised to life for our justification? Is this informing us that our justification required more than Christ's death, did it also required His resurrection?

Why? If legal penalty paid is what justifies us, why the need for resurrection?

When we realize that justification is not a legal process of getting a legal penalty paid, but an actual setting right, an actual putting beings right with God again, then we understand it took both Christ's death and resurrection to set humanity right with God again!

Now is some language easier to understand than other language? Was the reference just read fairly easy to comprehend? What about this one?

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and **accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are**

pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory. {FW 103.1}

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. **The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety.** The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My child, I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy--eternal life--because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." **Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness,** stands faultless before God. {FW 103.2}

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. **He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins.** Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal. {FW 104.1}

Thoughts?

What does it mean to have our sins pardoned or forgiven? Here is another place the penal model diverts our attention from the reality of what Christ has done and is doing – they describe forgiveness merely as legal pardon, which required Christ's death to achieve. Not so:

But **forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose.** When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts

are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

When we understand forgiveness is not mere pardon, but the actual process of reclaiming us from sin, of healing us, of removing sinfulness from our hearts and minds, then does it make sense why Jesus' death and resurrection was necessary? Does it make sense how justification and pardon are the same thing?

Why is justification the opposite of condemnation? Why are we condemned?

- "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**" Matt 12:33-37

What condemns us? Our very condition, either we have been justified and have Christ reproduced within, not by our work, but by abiding in a trust relationship with Him, or we have not.

What does it mean God forgives for Jesus sake? Jesus is the means of removing our sin and restoring us to Holiness. God could not

accomplish His purpose without Jesus and what He accomplished. So it is because of Jesus success that God is able to heal us, or remove our sinfulness from us and restore us to His original ideal. And this is what it means to forgive – “reclaiming from sin.”

- God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself 2Cor 5:19
- For God so loved the world... John 3:16
- If God is for us... Romans 8:31

What about Jesus taking our sins? What does this mean?

Isa 53:4:

Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.(NAS)

Matt 8:16-17:

16 And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill**

17 **in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."** (NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ “paid a legal penalty” for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). He removed fear and selfishness and guilt and shame from our hearts and minds!

Isa 53:5:

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25:

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

By His scourging we are healed does not represent a “legal” transaction in heaven where God’s attitude toward us is “healed”, but instead represents a change in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

Interestingly, the words translated as “sins” and “sin” in this text come from the same Greek word.

1Pet 2:24 *hamartia* translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once.¹

Why don’t they translate it as “sin” both times? Does it make it clearer?

My paraphrase:

He took upon himself our sinfulness, our terminal condition, in his own person upon the cross, so that we could be freed from sin and live the right way, loving God and others more than ourselves. You have been healed by the remedy his painful ordeal procured.

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G266

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “In Romans 4...” thoughts? Do you agree with stage one, God’s promise to provide all that is needed to save us? Do you agree with stage two, that we respond to God’s initiative by trusting Him? What about stage three? Is it when we trust Him that stage three is a pronouncement, or some legal credit?

Why do they stop short of what God actually does? When we trust Him a change has been wrought in the believer – the mind that was enmity with God is now in a state of trust with God! This is a radical change in the believer brought about by grace. And in the mind/heart that trusts God the Spirit dwells and reproduces Christ’s character within!

Any thoughts or questions about this?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “According to this...” thoughts?

A better meaning than “accounted” righteous when he trusted God, is recognized to be right with God, or was seen as standing in right relationship with God.

Do we agree that faith or trust in God in no way voids God’s law?

Do you see the lesson struggling to make this point?

Let’s use the analogy given by the penal model of someone in a court. What if a person got a speeding ticket and was found guilty in court and fined the appropriate amount. But then Bill Gates steps up and not only pays the fine, but puts down 50 billion dollars for all future speeding tickets (our sins past, present and future are paid for at the Cross according to the penal model). While with each speeding ticket another \$100 dollar fine is paid from the 50 billion, and the law is still in effect – does the law have any real effect in the life of the person? When all future penalties are already paid what effect does that have on one?

But what if a person was dying of lung cancer from years of cigarette smoking, from breaking the laws of health, will a legal penalty help them? But what if there was a regenerating treatment that would heal the damage and the person, in trust, submitted to the treatment. Would the regenerating treatment in any way make void the law of respiration? And what if the person, after taking the remedy, went out and began smoking again?

Understanding correctly God's law as the template for life clarifies immediately that God's grace in healing sinners and restoring us to His original design, through all that Christ has done, in no way voids His law. It instead, as the Scripture says, establishes it. It puts life back in harmony with the law.

But when we see the law as legal, as a system imposed which requires payments made – then when the payment is made, the law no longer has power over a person. All my sins, past, present and future have been paid – so what of the law, we now have immunity because Christ bore my penalty.

Read last paragraph, “Paul sets forth...” thoughts?

Yes legalism is a perversion of it – then why are we still so strongly promoting a legal gospel? David prayed for a new heart and right spirit, to be changed in the inner man. David didn't pray to be covered so the Father couldn't see him, but prayed for God to search him and find any wicked way within him!

God wants to heal us, we need to be opening ourselves in trust to our Creator who alone can fix what is wrong! But when we believe our Creator is a stern judge who must punish any sin He sees, we instead create theories to hide us from Him.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to consider Romans 4:6-8:

- David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ⁷ “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ⁸ Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.” NIV

Thoughts?

Here it is in the New Century Version, which I believe gets verse six right:

- David said the same thing. He said that people are truly blessed when God, without paying attention to their deeds, makes people right with himself. Romans 4:6 NCV

The word translated credits is that same word *logizomai* which deals with reality, not suppositions. God does not recon, or consider someone righteous who is not. So the person is blessed who God has actually made right with Himself.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “It’s important to remember...” yes this is important. As we said last week one of the factors which has caused a legal slant to understanding the plan of salvation is that our legal justice system is based on Latin, and many of the words used in theology are Latin translations of the Greek. But another reason, is that Paul was speaking to legalistic people and in doing so he used language which was designed to reach them where they were. In order to do that he spoke in legal figures. Sadly, many today have taken Paul’s gracious figures of speech as the literal reality of God’s kingdom and have not grown past the legal language Paul needed to use to reach the legalistic people of his day.

Read last paragraph, “If Paul here...” thoughts? Are we saved by faith or grace through faith? Can we have faith, but in something or someone that doesn’t save?

When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed. **Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors,** and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. **Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith.** His self-righteousness strengthened his faith that he was doing God's service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. **False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time.** Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. **He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error.** "When the commandment came," says Paul, "sin revived, and I died." He then received the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced its transforming power upon his soul. The truth was so firmly planted in his heart that he could say, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

Thoughts?

At the end of SS class last week a question was raised regarding whether someone has to see justification as we are expressing it to be saved or not and we answered that question last week. One might contemplate, then what difference does it make?

And then I received this email this week from one of our class members:

The revelation of Gods character, presented in sabbath school, has had a huge impact in my life.

I feel that in addition and in unison with the message of God revealed through Christ, a greater emphasis on God revealed through us, and how his character looks in us, would be a powerful part of sabbath school.

We talk about the purpose of Christ's life and death, the remedy for sin, but not enough of how we are to take the remedy, and what kind of life we should be living.

I know that by merely observing the character of God it manifests itself in us. But, more emphasis on its appearance in our lives, and the role the sabbath school as a group and as individuals play in living lives like Christ, is, I think, necessary to encourage us in that direction.

We need reminder of how to take the remedy, and what side effects to expect.

Thoughts?

How do we take the remedy? Does it matter what we say about God? Does it make a difference in which God we place our faith?

- **It is a law of the mind, that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. The mental powers will surely become contracted,** and will lose their ability to grasp the deep meanings of the word of God, unless they are put vigorously and persistently to the task of searching for truth. **The mind will enlarge,** if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. Go below the surface; the richest treasures of thought are waiting for the skillful and diligent student. {CE 119.1}

- **It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.** Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}

Does it make a difference and real impact on the believe how they view God?

WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “If there had been...” thoughts?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: “**Love** your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, “**Love** your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **Love** your neighbor as yourself.’ **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” Matt 22:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7
- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258

Where does all life originate? In God He is the source of all life! But what is God's law? And while life comes from God what is that life built or based upon? His law of love!

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, "In the New Testament..." well said, this is absolutely true, anyone care to explain why?

Read last paragraph, "We often hear..." thoughts?

If the law is imposed, an arbitrary law enacted by God, to which His creatures must adhere on pain of death, and if sins can be transferred to an innocent replacement to be punished in our stead, then once that transfer and payment is complete the law has been satisfied.

But, this is not the problem – the problem is not a legal one but an actual one, we are in a condition which is its very nature at odds with God, incompatible with life and inconsistent with God's design. This had to be fixed.

So, what was nailed to the Cross?

FRIDAY

Questions 2-4 read and discuss