

Big Words in the Bible (Part 4): Justification

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Romans 4:1-5

In this series, we are looking at some big words in the Bible. All of them are “big” in terms of importance; but for some of them, we may be unsure of what they mean. In this fourth lesson, we will be looking at the word justification – what it means to be justified and how we can be justified before God.

The Meaning of the Word

- Greek word – dikaios
- Refers to God declaring man to be free from guilt and right before Him – from the root word (dikaios) for righteous; also related to the word for righteousness (dikaiosyne)
- Jesus’ death on the cross makes it possible for God to declare us to be right before Him – without His sacrifice, we could not be right before God

Understanding the Concept

- We cannot justify ourselves (Luke 16:15) – God knows our hearts and judges by a different standard than we do; Paul willingly submitted to God’s standard (1 Corinthians 4:4); not that he had a choice, but he accepted it
- God is the one who justifies (Romans 8:31-34) – this is not dependent upon the approval of anyone; the Lord is the ONE lawgiver and judge (James 4:12); we have no right to judge/condemn others
- We are justified by grace (Romans 3:24) – through the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:9); there is nothing we did to “earn” this (Romans 5:8; 6:23; Ephesians 2:4-5)
- We are justified by faith (Romans 3:28) – not by works of the Law; the Law pointed to Christ (Galatians 3:24); justified by works of faith (James 2:21-24); we must give up sin and turn to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Understanding This in Context

- Paul was addressing the misconception that works give us a reason to boast (Romans 4:2) – our works may impress others, but God sees the whole picture, including our hearts and faults
- God is the one who credits us as being righteous (Romans 4:3) – the Greek word means reckoned or counted; He does this when we are IN Christ; we are sanctified (new life), then justified (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- Justification is based upon our belief or faith in God (Romans 4:3, 5) – nothing we do apart from faith can help; not justified by faith alone (Romans 5:1); faith must necessarily include obedience (James 2:24)

- We do not want to be credited what we are due (Romans 4:4) – what we are due is death (Romans 6:23); by faith we can receive the gift of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8); that faith leads us to obedience (James 2:17-18)

Conclusion

- Through Jesus' death on the cross, we can be justified before God – this is a gift of God's grace through the blood that Jesus shed in His death; though we need to faithfully obey the Lord, we do not “earn” the designation of being “righteous”
- Let us take advantage of the sacrifice of Christ so we can be right before God