

The Wednesday Word, February 26, 2020: Faith and our New Verdict

Romans 3:24 *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

When we are justified (acquitted and declared righteous) we are rendered legally not guilty. This is much greater than receiving a pardon. When a person is pardoned the Judge is saying, “You did the crime, but I forgive you.” This, however, falls far short of justification for in justification, the Judge says, “You are not guilty, you did not commit the crime.” Unfortunately, this distinction is not always pressed home, especially in many of our old hymns. We sing, for example, “I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me; And purchased my ‘pardon’ when nailed to the tree.” But, beautiful as the Hymn is, Jesus did much more than purchase our pardon, He purchased our acquittal!

It is interesting to note that in the King James version of the Bible there is no mention, in the New Testament, of the word pardon. It is an entirely Old Testament concept. Yet there are those who will fight tooth and nail to maintain the position that we are pardoned by the work of the cross. Justification, however, we say again is much greater than pardon, it is full and entire acquittal! In fact, to be justified is the direct opposite of being condemned. A condemned man can be pardoned but his pardon does not clear him of the guilt of having committed his crimes. However, for the believer, there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1) that is, there is no declaration by the court of Heaven that we are guilty.

Faith takes a hold of this new verdict and makes it our own. Faith believes Heaven’s declared ruling! Understanding the declaration of Heaven’s court, the believer will not look to any quality within himself to rest upon. We, as believers, can now stand before God, in Jesus Christ, by faith plus nothing.

Faith grasps that it is Christ “for us” not Christ “in us” which saves us. We are saved by being “in Christ” not by Christ being in us. Our justification is through the finished work of one man and one man alone...the Lord Jesus Christ. We, therefore, must renounce all claims of merit on our behalf and rest our confidence in Christ and His good works for us.

Horatius Bonar, in his masterpiece on Justification, *The Everlasting Righteousness*, tells us, “*Christ in us, the hope of glory*”(Colossians 1:27), is a well-known and blessed truth; but Christ IN US, our justification, is a ruinous error, leading man away from a crucified Christ -a Christ crucified FOR US.

Christ for us is one truth; Christ in us is quite another. The mingling of these two together, or the transposition of them, is the nullifying of the one finished work of the Substitute.

Let it be granted that Christ in us is the source of holiness and fruitfulness (John 15:4); but let it never be overlooked that first of all there be Christ FOR US, as our propitiation, our justification, our righteousness.

~~And that’s the Gospel Truth!~~

The risen Christ in us, our justification, is a modern theory which subverts the cross.

(Bonar: *The Everlasting Righteousness*: Cpt 7, Not Faith but Christ)