

### **The Wednesday Word, Feb. 27, 2013: Gospel Righteousness**

The gospel truth of Justification means that every charge against the believer has been dropped. As the scripture declares, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies" (Romans 8:33). There are no accusations that can stand against the Lord's sheep because they have been declared not guilty in the courtroom of God. But there's more!

Justification goes far beyond being cleared of guilt. When we are justified, we are not only acquitted, but also declared righteous. This is a necessary truth for not only does the Law forbid sin, it also demands righteousness. But where do we find a righteousness that satisfies the Father? Some people reason that regeneration is the solution for this. However, vital as regeneration is, it can not provide perfect righteousness. The flesh still lusts against the spirit (Galatians 5:17).

In addition, the "not guilty" declaration, although essential, does not, and can not, clothe us with righteousness. It declares us innocent, but there is a significant difference between being innocent and being righteous! The truth is, the man who is declared not guilty is still unworthy in himself. Everything he does is flawed, imperfect and defiled by sin.

But here's the good news, gospel justification not only declares us not guilty, but also declares us righteous. We are now accepted before God having, not only been washed in the blood of Christ, but also by having Christ's righteousness reckoned as being ours. Martyn Lloyd Jones says,

"In justifying us, God tells us that He has taken our sins and our guilt and has "imputed" them to, "put them to the account of," the Lord Jesus Christ and punished them in Him. He announces also that, having done that, He now puts to our account, or "imputes" to us, the perfect righteousness of His own dear Son. The Lord Jesus Christ obeyed the law perfectly; He never broke it in any respect; He gave a full and a perfect satisfaction to all its demands. That full obedience constitutes His righteousness. What God does is to put to our account, to put upon us, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In declaring us to be justified, God proclaims that He now looks on us, not as we are, but as clothed with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Because of Justification, God looks at us and says that (1) we are not guilty, and (2) we are righteous in Christ. Our past has been legally and justly expunged, and we have been given a totally new identity. It's like being in a witness protection program that is 100% secure!

Christ is made unto us righteousness." 1 Corinthians 1:30. This is the blessing of grace that belongs to every believer. The Father looks at us and sees us as righteous in Christ. If a man, however, refuses to submit to this righteousness, he, in his folly, is declaring Christ's righteousness to be superfluous and un-necessary. Furthermore, he is saying that man's righteousness (his in particular) is sufficient for acceptance before God. Such a person is not in the gospel; he will perish.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who ought to my charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through these I am,

From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Some years ago an Irish Farmer stood up to testify at a gospel meeting. He said, “Brothers and Sisters look at me. I’m not a pretty sight. In fact, I’m just a big, old, ugly Irish farmer, but in God’s sight I’m altogether lovely for I’m all dressed up in the righteousness of Christ.”

This man understood something of the benefits of the gospel.

And that’s the Gospel Truth!