

The Wednesday Word: How God Gets Us to Heaven - Part 1

Today, let's consider the grand truth of Justification. Luther called it – 'the truth by which the church stands or falls.' If this is true, it means it is also the truth by which you and I stand or fall.

What a vital doctrine! If we think that we can be truly saved and lost, we have no understanding of Justification. Likewise, if we think that getting to heaven depends upon whether or not we die in a state of grace then, again, we have no understanding of Justification.

Here's a good definition of Justification, '*God out of his mercy and grace for Christ's sake acquits us of sin and declares us righteous.*'

So, let's consider this truth of Justification. May we, in doing so, profit in our understanding and come to appreciate and love the Lord Jesus even more. The first thing we notice is,

1. We are justified by God.

Romans 8:33 *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect. It is God that justifies."*

Please turn loose your sanctified imagination with me for a moment. See the scene. You are in the Courtroom of God ... in the dock.

The question is asked, "Is there anyone here who can accuse this person?" The request is greeted with silence.

Again, the inquiry is made, "Who will bring an accusation against this person?" Again, there is absolute silence ... no voice is heard. No one speaks up!

So, the question is raised yet again, "Who shall bring a charge against this person? No one steps forward. Then, suddenly, there is a commotion in the courtroom. A voice calls out, "Make way for the Prosecutor in Chief." We look around and there he stands, Lucifer, his satanic majesty himself.

He calls out, "I am the accuser of the brethren and I charge the person in the dock with sin." His charges against you are valid for all have sinned.

But here's the Gospel Truth. The only one who can declare a guilty sinner guilty is the judge of all the earth ... the Almighty One. Satan and His accusations get nowhere with God because ultimately, all sin is against God not against Satan.

There is a moment more silence and then the Judge speaks up and tells Satan to hush, then declares, "My verdict is that ... there is now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. All in Christ are acquitted of all charges against them."

That's stunning!

Let me explain. Sin had made us guilty, condemned and separated from God. But by virtue of Christ's death on our behalf instead of being declared guilty, believers are now declared not guilty.

God the Judge declares this!

He is a righteous judge ...In other words, His verdict is right.
He is the all-powerful judge. That means, His verdict will stand and not be overturned.
God had been sinned against so God Himself did something about the problem.
And what did He do?

He clothed Himself with humanity and in His power and wisdom became man without ceasing to be God. He did not become partly man and partly God, but was, in the person of Christ Jesus, fully God and fully man. The early church believed this. Here is the translation of an ancient inscription about Jesus, found etched in marble in Asia Minor,
"I am what I was – God.

I was not what I am – man.

I am now both -- God and man."

God came to this earth, became one of us and as man lived blamelessly and offered Himself to the Father as a sacrifice for our sins. He died on that cross, was buried and rose from the dead. All this He did as His people's substitute.

He, the highest judge in all the universe has brought in the not guilty verdict to all who trust in Christ Jesus.

We are justified by God.

To be continued.

And that's the Gospel Truth!