

Justified Freely by God's Grace

Romans 3.23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness ... 26 that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

* "Justify" in the Bible means to ...

– Deut 25.1 instructs Israel's judges to "justify the righteous and condemn the wicked."

– Prov 17.15 says, "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD."

– In 1Kings 8.32, Solomon calls on God to "hear in heaven, ... and judge your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness."

– In Mat 12.3, Jesus says, "By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

* How is God's verdict justifying someone different from our American practice of declaring someone "not guilty"?

* What does "righteous" mean?

* When Paul says we have been "freely justified by God's grace" (vs 24), he is saying ...

* What was the Father's justification of Jesus?

– 1Tim 3.16 "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory."

– Rom 1.3-4 "[God's] Son Jesus Christ our Lord ... was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead."

* Why does Jesus being justified seem strange to us?

* Jesus was accused of ...

* What was Jesus convicted of, resulting in his death sentence? (Mat 26.63-66)

* How do we as sinners receive a verdict from God that we are righteous, so that we too might receive resurrection life?

* How are we considered righteous when we are not?

* How does Christ's righteousness become ours?

– 2Cor 5.21 "[God] made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

– Gal 2.20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in [or by the faithfulness of] the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

* Sometimes the Bible speaks of righteousness being "accounted" or "imputed" to us.

Rom 4.5 "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works."

* But don't think in terms of us and Jesus having separate ... It sends us down the wrong road ... But when you think in terms of our ... with Christ, it avoids all those difficulties.

* As we conclude, we are once again led back to ...

* Our response if simple, yet ...