

Justification

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Innes Macrae

[0 : 00] You will find my text this morning in Romans chapter 3 and let us read from verse 19. Romans chapter 3 and verse 19.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God.

Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, the epistle of Paul to the Romans is a book, one of the books of scripture that without any question has had the very greatest influence upon the Christian church.

It was through reading various verses in the 13th chapter of this book that the great Augustine, in the 4th century, came to a knowledge of salvation.

And Augustine went on to become one of the greatest men in the history of the Christian church. It was the reading of the epistle to the Romans that was so marvelously blessed to Martin Luther in the 16th century, so that he came to an experience of God's salvation, and he went on to become the most outstanding leader of the Protestant Reformation.

[2 : 03] The book of Romans also played its part in the conversion of the best known of all the Puritans, John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress.

It was while Luther's commentary on this epistle to the Romans was being read, that the heart of John Wesley was strangely warned in that house in Aldousgate Street in London in the 1730s, and he was prepared for the great work that he had to do.

Undoubtedly, this book has had the greatest influence upon the Christian church. What is the message of the epistle to the Romans? The message of the epistle to the Romans is, of course, the great salvation that there is in Jesus Christ.

And there is no book of scripture of where there is expounded so fully and so systematically the doctrine of justification. There are other experiences of the Christian that are brought to our attention here in this book, but they are always presented to us as the benefits that flow from justification.

And in this section of the epistle to the Romans from which my text has been taken, Paul is systematically expounding the doctrine of justification.

[3 : 28] And so my first point this morning is what justification is. What justification is. The word, the term justified, occurs there in my text in verse 20.

By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. There it is put negatively. But later on in the text, Paul goes on to state it positively.

He talks in verses 21 and 22 of the righteousness of God which is by faith, by faith of Jesus Christ. Justification.

What is it? Well, justification is not merely pardon. It is not merely pardon.

Paul, before he goes on to explain what justification is, tells us what it is not. And it is not, I have to say, it is not merely pardon.

[4 : 32] I am old enough to remember the days in this country when a man who was convicted of murder was executed. He was hanged.

And I can well remember too how on occasions the Home Secretary would sometimes remit, he would sometimes decide that the condemned person was not to be executed.

He would take all the circumstances into consideration and he would grant a pardon. The Home Secretary would exercise his prerogative of mercy and he would grant a pardon.

Now that person was not justified. That person was still guilty in the eyes of the law. Before the law he was a guilty person. He was pardoned but he was certainly not justified.

Justification includes pardon but it is more than pardon. The two are distinct. They are not to be simply identified.

[5 : 37] Nor does the term to justify mean to make just, to make righteous within. That is the Roman Catholic doctrine and it is found nowhere in the scriptures.

The teaching of the Church of Rome is that at regeneration there is infused into the individual, into the sinner, righteousness. He is given this inherent righteousness and on the basis of that righteousness, on the ground of that righteousness he is justified.

And he continues to be justified on the ground of the subsequent works which he performs. It is a doctrine of justification by works and it is totally unbiblical.

if a person is justified on the basis of an inherent righteousness then no one alive can be justified.

For there is no one who has an inherent righteousness that is acceptable to God who has this inward conformity to the law of God and to the righteousness God requires.

[6 : 49] no justification is something that is not subjective it is objective. It is something that has to do not with one's inward condition but with one's outward status and standing.

It is a forensic a judicial act it is a declaration of a judge declaring that person to be righteous in the eyes of the law not guilty before the law.

The justified person is constituted and declared righteous before God's law. God constitutes this person righteous and therefore declares him to be righteous in his standing before him.

He constitutes righteous and righteous as by one man's disobedience all are made sinners so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

He is a constituted righteous and so declared righteous. what do I mean? I mean this that that person is not condemned.

[8 : 14] He is justified. He is not condemned because there are no grounds on which he can be condemned. He possesses the righteousness that the law of God requires.

Justification and condemnation condemnation and justification these are opposites. these are antithetical the one to the other the opposite the one of the other and that is how the terms are used not only in scripture but in ordinary everyday life as well.

To condemn is not merely to punish it is to declare the person worthy of punishment to justify is not merely to remit the punishment it is to declare that there are no grounds on which the punishment can be inflicted justification what justification is but secondly I want to notice with you the law does not justify the law does not justify we're told that there in verse 20 therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight Paul's great concern here is this how can an individual how can a sinner come to possess this justifying righteousness this righteousness which God will accept this righteousness on the ground of which a sinner can be justified and before he tells us how a sinner can come to possess it he tells us how he does not come to possess it he does not come to possess it by the deeds of the law by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified no individual shall be justified in

God's sight now it is very necessary to emphasize that there were so many of those Jews who thought that by their own observance of the deeds of the law they could be justified that was the great mistake the Pharisees had been making that was the mistake Paul himself made before his experience of conversion on the Damascus road and it is the great mistake that modern moral man makes too modern moral man who thinks there's no need of an atonement he says I lead a moral upright respectable life and so I justify myself I'm leading this respectable moral life and because of that of the life I lead I will acquire salvation and gain an entry into heaven but we're told plainly here no man no flesh by the deeds of the law by his own law keeping can be justified can come into possession of this righteousness why not it is because the righteousness which the law of

God requires is a perfect righteousness God is himself a perfectly moral being and when a person is justified before him it must be on the ground of a perfect righteousness and we're told that there is and we know that there is no man who meets that requirement there is no man who by his character or by his conduct meets this requirement is perfectly conformed outwardly and inwardly to God's moral law to God's law we're told there in verse 23 for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God the glory of God that's the requirement that's the standard and none of us is able to reach that standard what the law does is it gives to us the knowledge of sin verse 20 says for by the law is the knowledge of sin the law shows us what a sin is

[12 : 42] I had not known sin said Paul but by the law for I had not known lust except the law had said thou shalt not covet the law shows us the seriousness of sin that it is rebellion against God and affront to him the law shows us that we deserve to be condemned for our sin that we're guilty and deserve to be condemned on account of our sin verse 19 says now we know that what things soever the law saith it saith to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God it says it to those who are under the law or in the law the word there that is rendered under can be rendered in it's a different word than the word that is rendered under in other cases contexts where we have the term under the law it speaks to those who are in the law and the term law here has particular reference to the

Old Testament that's clear from what precedes the whole of the Old Testament is considered here as the law and the Old Testament the law it speaks to the Jews it spoke to the Jews words of condemnation but it is not only the Jews who are in the law the law of God has been written upon the heart of every man and so what the Old Testament the words of condemnation of the Old Testament spoke to the Jews who had that written form of the law it speaks also to all men to every man for we have all broken God's law that is surely very plain from what we have there in verse 19 that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God every mouth we are all guilty we have all broken

God's commandments we have all sinned against God and so we have rebelled against him our sin is a rebellion against him it's an affront to God himself and we are all guilty before him and this condemnation is spoken the condemnation that the law speaks it speaks to all what the law says it says to those who are in the law we are all in that respect in the law he God is holy he is utterly holy he is a consuming fire he is of pure eyes and to behold evil he cannot look upon iniquity he is light darkness at all and so our sin is something that is desperately serious we are all of us sinful by nature we have this corrupt nature within we've been born with it it is part of us this corruption and so there is this prevailing disposition in each one of us of opposition to

God and rebellion against him the carnal mind is enmity against God we are defiant rebels steeped in corruption and in vileness and therefore God's wrath is upon us we deserve his wrath and his wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness in men it's upon those who have broken the law and those who live and die in that condition go to the place that God consigns all those who live and die in that condition that place is called hell and that is where the lawbreaker the sinner deserves to be do do you object to such teaching when the law does its work all objections cease what the law says we're told here it says to those who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before

God when the law does its work those objections cease every mouth is stopped every mouth every sinner is silenced his mouth is shut and he acknowledges his guilt men have so much to say in their own favour they make so many excuses for themselves my faults they're due to my environment they're due to my upbringing they say that God is so unfair to them it's so unfair of God to condemn me they pontificate about what God should do should not do why has this come to me why has this happened to me it's unfair why does God allow it they're so ready to point to what they themselves have done the good things they themselves have done but when the law does its work all that ceases every mouth is stopped the sinner is silenced for he knows that he is guilty before

[18 : 16] God's law all the world becomes guilty before God clearly then there is no one who can be justified by the law by the deeds of the law by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight the law does not justify the law condemns try harder than anyone on earth has ever tried to keep God's law and you will not thereby be justified because by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight for by the law is the knowledge of sin the law does not justify we've noticed what justification is we've noticed the law does not justify thirdly notice righteousness revealed righteousness revealed we've noticed that the sinner needs a justifying righteousness a perfect righteousness where is he to find it but now says Paul here in verse 21 but now in the gospel now in the coming of Jesus

Christ now with the incarnation and the life and the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ now this righteousness has been revealed but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ notice very briefly three points about this righteousness that is revealed first of all it is the righteousness of God it is the righteousness of God it's called that in verse 21 now but now the righteousness of God is manifested and it's called the righteousness of God because it comes from God it is given by God God is the author of it it originates with him and it's a righteousness that is acceptable to him this righteousness has been established worked out by the man

Christ Jesus he Christ the eternal son of God took our human nature and he in his human nature was made under the law that law that we had broken he kept it perfectly the law could not condemn him for any personal demerit in him and not only that but he took his people's guilt he suffered their condemnation he met all the demands of God's law and God's justice upon them he bore our sin in his own body on the tree and he made full atonement by his life of perfect obedience to God's law and by that sacrifice that he offered that sub penal substitutionary sacrifice he has established this perfect righteousness and that is the righteousness that God gives to those he justifies he gives it to them as a gift he reckons it theirs he credits it to them he imputes it to them he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him it's a righteousness of God and secondly notice this about it this righteousness is without the law that is what we're told but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested what does this mean it is without the law it means that it is apart from the law we do not acquire it by any law keeping on our part our attempts to keep the law of God play no part whatsoever in our gaining and our acquiring in our coming to possess this righteousness we do not receive it because of any conformity within us to the precepts of the law a legal righteousness that is a righteousness a man obtains by keeping the law of God is unattainable

God therefore has provided another righteousness another righteousness that is not a legal righteousness it is his free gift and yet it is a righteousness that upholds his law it does not dismiss the law for it is a righteousness that is ours because we are justified and come to possess this righteousness on the basis on the ground of the law keeping of another on the ground of another's paying the penalty of our law breaking on the ground of Christ's law keeping and Christ's atoning sacrifice it is on that ground that we obtain this righteousness so you see the law is not dismissed we receive a righteousness that does conform to God's law but as far as we are concerned it is without the law for it is not the product of our law keeping this righteousness is without the law and notice this thirdly concerning this righteousness the law and the prophets bore witness to it the law and the prophets bear witness to it verse 21 says being witnessed or being witnessed to by the law and the prophets the

Jews divided the old testament their scriptures into two sections they took the first five books the books of Moses and they called them the law and then they took the rest of the scriptures and in a general sense they called those books the prophets so the term the law and the prophets is simply a reference to the old testament scriptures the old testament paul is saying here bears witness to this righteousness there are those who teach you know that in old testament days the way of salvation the way of justification was by works by keeping the law observing the deeds of the law whereas in new testament times the way of justification the way of salvation is different it's without the law it's apart from the law they in effect those people destroy the unity of the scriptures and make the way of salvation in old testament times different from the way of salvation in new testament times but that of course is totally false as i have said it destroys the unity of the scriptures the way of salvation in old testament times was exactly the same as it is in new testament times the difference is that in old testament times what was seen so often just in outline and sometimes even dimly in types and in shadows and in prophecy has now under the gospel been clearly and plainly revealed it has to use the term here in our text been manifested it of course the old testament bears witness to this righteousness which is apart from the law if i time i could give you hundreds of references to show that from genesis chapter 3 verse 15 onwards the proangelium the promise that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent from there onwards it's taught again and again and again abraham we are told believed god and it was counted to him for righteousness we're told in the 32nd psalm we sang it a little while ago blessed is the man to whom the lord does not impute his sin there it is put negatively but is put positively in many places by his knowledge says isaiah 53 shall my righteous servant justify many in jeremiah 23 we are told that this coming messiah he is the lord our righteousness jehovah said ken the lord our righteousness you see this teaching that the righteousness which justifies is a righteousness that god gives and which is not merited by any law keeping on our part which is apart from the law that teaching is found throughout the scriptures in the old testament and in the new righteousness revealed and now fourthly i want us to notice how a sinner comes into possession of this righteousness how a sinner comes into possession of this righteousness this righteousness as i've said is god's gift to him you don't get it by working for it you don't get it by the deeds of the law by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified it's a gift god gives it but how does a sinner receive it well we're told in verse 22 even the righteousness of god which is by faith of jesus christ it is through faith by faith of jesus christ the word there rendered by in this context means through

[28 : 20] does not mean on account of the original greek makes that more plain than the english translation can do it is not on account of our faith it is not because of our faith it is not on the ground of our faith that we receive this righteousness that would be to make faith a work that would be to give some merit to the sinner himself on the ground of which he receives this righteousness this justification but that is not so faith is merely the instrument through which he receives this righteousness it is the righteousness of god which is through faith of jesus christ through faith in jesus christ the faith referred to is not faith in general it is not a general confidence in god or a belief that the bible is the word of god it is a faith that has christ as his object knowledge is an important element in faith we must have our knowledge of the gospel doctrines assent is an important element in faith we must receive and agree to and assent to those doctrines but in true saving faith there is always another element a third element and it is trust it is committing oneself in faith to the lord jesus christ to save us it is resting on him and relying upon him alone for our salvation it is believing upon him it is trusting it is abandoning all hope of being saved by any deeds of our own my work to keep the law my attempts at law keeping it's abandoning all that and every other means and simply relying upon jesus christ and upon him alone committing oneself in faith to him cast thy deadly doing down down at jesus feet stand in him and him alone gloriously complete all who commit themselves in faith to christ who rely solely upon him are justified either righteousness of god is by faith of jesus christ unto all and upon all them that believe all who believe there's no difference whether a person is rich or poor young or old jew or gentile moral or immoral respectable or profligate if he trusts in christ he is justified and says our text it is unto all and upon all them that believe it's upon them those words are not in many of the modern versions and indeed they are missing from some good manuscripts but there are scholars reputable scholars who think they should be retained this righteousness it's upon all them that believe it covers them it overflows them it clothes them as a garment does god clothes those who trust in his son with the righteousness of christ my friend is this righteousness yours do you have it no righteousness that you work out by your own efforts however diligently you try is acceptable to god that righteousness will not justify

you only the righteousness that god gives as a free gift and that is received through faith only that is a justifying righteousness i urge you my fellow sinner exercise faith in the lord jesus christ this is a matter of life or death of heaven or of hell believe on the lord jesus christ and you will be saved let us pray oh lord our god we thank thee for the gospel way of salvation we thank thee that it is without the law that it is simply through faith in the lord jesus christ we bless thee for the perfect justifying righteousness that thou dost give as a free gift and that is received through faith oh we pray that thou would write such truth upon our minds and upon our hearts and enable us to exercise faith in the savior and so come to possess this righteousness and be assured of everlasting salvation hear us we pray for jesus sake amen amen just zung cái folders ■■■igne der workplace