

# Justification By Faith #4

## By Bill Denton

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. For the past few weeks we've been looking at the subject of justification by faith

1. In the first lesson, the goal was to simply show that justification by faith is not the creation of some off-the-wall theologian, rather it is biblical in the deepest sense, and biblical in its specific terminology
2. In the second lesson, we discussed the contrast between the law of works and the law of faith
  - a. these are the two options we have for trying to stand right with God, and there are no others
  - b. the law of works is a law that demands perfection, and it puts the focus on human performance – do well enough and one is right with God, fail and there is no hope at all
  - c. the law of faith is a law rooted in belief and trust, not of self, but of Christ – we appeal to his perfection, his sacrifice in order to be right with God
  - d. the law of works justifies no one; but the law of faith potentially justifies any and all of us
3. In the last lesson we discussed the relationship between faith and works
  - a. it's a deserving discussion because of the modern definition of faith that some use that results in thinking that faith means only to believe
  - b. the truth is that faith has always had action to it, and without action, faith is dead
  - c. what God wants from us is a faith that works
  - d. he does not want us to offer our works as the basis for justification, but he surely wants our faith to produce action consistent with what we believe
  - e. the emphasis in justification is not what we do, but what Christ did, but we are to believe in, trust, and obey that which we believe and trust

#### B. We need a renewed emphasis on justification by faith because we need a renewed emphasis On the saving work of Christ

1. Modern Christians need to understand that nothing they do accomplishes salvation
2. Jesus saves
  - a. not the church
  - b. not any other person
  - c. not any meritorious or deserving work we do
  - d. justification and salvation is a free gift of God's grace

#### C. This morning, I want to share some of the benefits of justification by faith

1. We need this kind of encouragement
2. It makes faith a God-honoring action
3. It helps us keep the right perspective

## I. REAL FAITH CHALLENGES US TO LIVE WHAT WE SAY WE BELIEVE

### A. Illustration

My wife put up a bulletin board several years ago that said it well. There was this huge green alligator parading along with a sign. The sign read: "I am a horse!" The caption underneath read: "What you are speaks louder than what you say."

1. I think that's the problem of many Christians, and it's one reason that justification by faith is a more relevant subject than many like to believe
  - a. the kind of faith that God recognizes and the faith by which he will credit righteousness to our account, like he did Abraham, is a faith that demonstrates our belief and trust
  - b. anyone can claim to be a believer
  - c. but only a real believer will carry out that belief in the conduct of his/her life
2. What you are always speaks louder than what you say

### B. Illustration

We can prove our faith by our committal to it, and in no other way. Any belief that does not command the one who holds it is not a real belief; it is a pseudo belief only. And it might shock some of us profoundly if we were brought suddenly face to face with our beliefs and forced to test them in the fires of practical living. -- A. W. Tozer

### C. But, this point ought not discourage us, it ought to encourage us

1. The only person who would be discouraged by this discussion is the person who thinks that faith is only something to be claimed but not lived
2. The person who truly believes, can live no other way

### D. Consider the examples of faith in Hebrews 11

1. It was by faith that Abel offered a better sacrifice
2. It was by faith that Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death
3. By faith Noah prepared an ark
4. By faith Abraham obeyed when God called him
5. By faith Sarah received the ability to conceive a child in old age
6. By faith Abraham offered Isaac on the altar because he believed God could raise the dead
7. Read the rest of the examples in that chapter – what you'll find is a list of faithful people
  - a. faithful means "full of faith"
  - b. the faithful can live no other way
  - c. those who claim faith but do not really possess it, are always struggling with it, always resisting it's call and its demands

### E. To know that we are justified by faith is to know that one's entire life is an expression of Belief in, and trust of, God and to be confident that God sees our trust and gives us that which We most need and can least do for ourselves

1. Justification by faith answers the question, "Why should I trust God?"
2. Justification by faith says there is a reason to live as God has called us

## II. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH MEANS THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD

### A. Illustration

You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you. -- C. S. Lewis

### B. Justification is a matter of life and death

1. Either our relationship with God is made right or we are desperately without hope
2. When a person finally understands the problem and consequence of sin, that person will finally understand why it is so important to base hope on Jesus and not on self
  - a. Galatians 3:11-14 -- Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
  - b. no one is justified by law because of the demand of that law
  - c. the demand is always total, sinless perfection
  - d. faith, on the other hand, provides a way to be justified even while full of imperfections

### C. Illustration

For each of us the time is surely coming when we shall have nothing but God. Health and wealth and friends and hiding places will all be swept away, and we shall have only God. To the man of pseudo faith that is a terrifying thought, but to real faith it is one of the most comforting thoughts the heart can entertain. -- A. W. Tozer

1. We will acknowledge that all our accomplishments, all our wealth, our health, our friends, everything we could count on, will never make us right with God
2. We will admit with the prophet Isaiah in 64:6, "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."

### D. Faith, however, looks to Jesus and sees the answer

1. 2 Cor 5:20-21 -- Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
2. Faith makes possible what is impossible for it turns from self to Christ

### III. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH MEANS THAT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ALWAYS DEPENDS ON FAITH

#### A. Note the following verses:

1. Acts 20:20-21 -- . . . I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Acts 26:15- 18 -- And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’
3. Rom 3:21-26 -- But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

#### B. Why this is so important

1. Because we live in an age in which people have strange ideas about what it takes to be right with God
  - a. “I’ve got to be perfect”
  - b. “I’ve got to do everything exactly right”
  - c. “I’ve got to understand the Bible perfectly”
  - d. “I’ve got to completely overcome sin”
  - e. “If I get everything right, I’ll get to heaven”
2. I’ve got good news for you – Jesus did everything you’ll ever need
  - a. believe in and trust him for your salvation
  - b. put your faith in Jesus and God will credit your faith as righteousness
  - c. give Jesus all you sins, shortcomings, misunderstandings, and imperfections
  - d. faith in Jesus Christ is the issue

## CONCLUSION

**A. Illustration** -- I prayed for faith and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had up to this time closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since.-- Dwight Lyman Moody

**B. More of us need to do this – grow in faith**

1. It's the only way to take the focus off ourselves and put it on Jesus
2. It's the only way for us to find our justification before God
3. It's the only way for God to work in us and through us for our benefit

**C. Would you exercise your faith in Jesus today?**

**D. Invitation**