

Title: For Our Justification
Text: Romans 4:22-25
Theme: Justification
Occasion: Resurrection Day, 2022
Prop Stmnt. Christ was raised for our justification

Read Romans 4:22-25

I could give you a number of proofs for the resurrection of Christ, and I think that many of you would resonate with that. However, I think most of you already believe that. If you thought that the life of Christ was a legend and his death and resurrection a myth, I doubt that you would “waste” a perfectly good Sunday morning in a gathering with a bunch of delusional psychopaths. So, while most of you likely believe in the resurrection of Christ, you may not understand why it is so important. The early believers clearly thought so. Peter preached his first sermon on the birthday of the church in Acts 2 on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In Acts 3 Peter preached again on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In Acts 4 he does it again, and in Acts 5 he does it again. The next time Peter’s sermon is recorded is in chapter 10 and he preaches on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. And in Acts 13, we have the first recorded sermon of Paul’s and he preached on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the most important event in history. Now, according to this text, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is directly related to the doctrine of justification. The doctrine of justification is dependent on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the resurrection of Jesus is THE most important event, AND since the resurrection of Jesus is directly related to the doctrine of justification, that means that this doctrine is the most important doctrine. Yes, you must know and believe that Jesus rose again from the dead – but why? Why did Jesus rise again from the dead? He was “raised for our justification.” The resurrection of Jesus is the most important event which makes the doctrine of justification the most important doctrine. Justification is the most important doctrine because justification is the compound solution to our compound problem.

Let’s say that your parents are going to run some errands for a couple of hours and they leave you with explicit instructions. You are not permitted to play video games. You must get your homework done. Don’t do that, but do this. But, instead of being gone for the full two hours like you thought, they are back in an hour and a half and you are so absorbed in Fortnite, that you don’t hear them come in and there you are, not only busted playing video games, but you don’t have any homework done. Now, you have two problems. There is a) the problem that you did what you should not have done and there is b) the problem that you did not do what you were supposed to do. You have a compound problem. A compound problem requires a compound solution.

We have a compound problem. We have all done things that we should not do. That is called sin or rebellion. We need forgiveness. We need our debt to be paid. But that is only half of the problem. We also have the problem that none of us have done what we

should have done. Justification is the compound solution to our compound problem. Think of justification as a doctrinal diamond. It is one diamond with several facets, each of which splashes beauty, but taken together it is dazzling.

1. What does justification mean?

Justification is a legal or a forensic term. God is the Judge and we are the accused. The evidence of our guilt is overwhelming. However, in spite of our guilt, justification means for God to declare you righteous. How can that be? How can God do that and on what basis can God do that? Well, it is NOT because we are good enough or because we can earn it. It is not because we deserve it. In the beginning of chapter 4 Paul is making the argument that if Abraham was justified (declared and viewed as being righteous by God) because of his works, then Abraham would have something to boast about. i.e. God says that I am ok, because of what I have done! Quoting from Genesis 15 says, "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.*" It wasn't Abraham's works that justified him, it was his faith. Paul makes it very clear in verses 5-6 that faith alone, not works is the means of our being right before God. To be justified means to be counted as being righteous. We are counted, considered, viewed as, treated as, declared by God to be righteous. Justification therefore is the act of God by which he imputes your sin onto Christ and imputes the righteousness of Christ onto you. It is the compound solution. What you did wrong (sin) is atoned for and you are given credit for what you failed to do. In the eyes of God, you are righteous! But, how can that be? It obviously is related in some way to the resurrection. The text says that this is directly connected to the resurrection.

2. How does it work?

Let's look at this a section at a time. How can you get credit for living a perfectly good life when you haven't? How can you get credit for the life of Christ? God can impute the righteousness of Christ to you because:

A. Christ lived for God and for you.

You cannot understand the meaning and significance of the death of Christ if you do not understand the life of Christ. Before Christ died, Christ lived. Apart from the life of Christ, the death of Christ would be meaningless. When Christ came to this earth, he came in the form of a man. He came as our representative because our first representative was Adam and he made a colossal mess. And when Adam, sinned, he was responsible for plunging the entire human race into sin. Christ came to do what Adam failed to do. Christ came as the 2nd Adam. What that means is that everything that Christ did, he did for God and for us. He lived in our place. He lived a substitutionary life and He lived it perfectly before God and for God, even as He did it for us. Everything that Christ thought, said, and did was perfect. He did everything that He was supposed to do, and He did not do anything that He was not supposed to do.

Christ never did anything that he should not have done. There were no marks against him, he had no spiritual debt to pay. On the other hand, he did everything that he was supposed to do. He had spiritual capital. What he did, he did for God and for you. What he didn't do, he didn't do because he was living for God and for you. When I say he lived for God and for you, I mean that Christ lived to carry out God's purposes for Him even as he lived as the 2nd Adam in your place. He lived to fulfill God's will and He lived for your benefit. He lived to fulfill the law that God had established – He lived to carry out God's intended purpose for us even as He lived in our place. God can impute your sin upon Christ because:

B. Christ died for God and for you.

It was the perfectly righteous life of Christ that enabled Him to die such an infinitely significant death. His life was for God and for you, and his death was for God and for you. His death for you was in one sense, the greatest injustice that ever occurred. In 1977 Randall Dale Adams was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of a Texas policeman. His story was told in the documentary titled, *The Thin Blue Line* which raised some serious questions about his guilt. Just hours before his scheduled execution, Randall was granted a new trial, and a year later was released when the prosecutor's office acknowledged there was no real evidence against him. For 12 years he was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit.

Our justice system is not perfect. But the greatest injustice that has ever been committed was the sentencing and execution of the perfectly sinless and perfectly righteous Son of God. On a human level, his death was the greatest travesty of justice, because it was for you. On a human level, Christ died because of us. Speaking to his audience, Peter said in Acts 3.15, "You killed the author of life." Acts 4.10 "It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified..." But there is more to it than just that.

Christ died because this was the plan that God had established. Speaking of the conspiracy against Christ that resulted in his death, Peter said in Acts 4.28 "They (Herod, Pilate, Jews) did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen." Acts 2.23 says, "This man (Christ) was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross." Christ died because of the plan of God, which was for Christ to die for you. So, while on a human level, Christ's death was a travesty of justice, on a divine level his death was an awesome demonstration of justice because it was done to appease the righteous wrath of God against sin. Our sin is so infinitely serious, and the just and righteous response of true holiness to our sin is the awesome and terrifying wrath of God. Something had to be done in order to appease that wrath by becoming the recipient of that wrath. The wrath of the Father was not just perceived, it was real. Christ did not appease Him by calming Him down with gifts, the wrath of the Father against our sin was poured out fully upon His own Son and it was completely absorbed

by Christ. God exhausted his storehouse of wrath against our sin by using it up completely upon Christ. God wore out His wrath upon His Son, instead of upon us. Christ took that cup of wrath, that cup of suffering, so we could share in the cup of fellowship. And Christ emptied the cup of wrath. At his death Jesus said, IT IS FINISHED! (Not, “tag, your it.”) It is done. His death was for you and for God.

That is what Christ did. He died for God by taking the cup of wrath, which satisfied the justice of God and enabled God to turn loose His grace. He died for you by taking your punishment so that the debt of your sin could be paid and by offering in your place His perfectly righteous life, He provided the infinite righteousness that enables you to be credited with a righteousness that is not your own. That offering that He made for you, must be personally believed, embraced, loved and trusted by you. You cannot hold on to and love your sin and love Christ at the same time. It is one or the other. He lived for God and for you. He died for God and for you. He rose again, for God and for you. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

C. Christ rose again for God and for you.

In what way was the resurrection of Christ for God? Remember that when I am saying that it was FOR God, I mean on behalf of, or for the benefit of in the sense that what Christ did, accomplished the plan of God.

1) Christ Rose Again for God.

The life and death of Christ were all part of God’s plan to rescue His people from their sin. Christ accomplished what He set out to do. Christ came to redeem His people. Christ did that! That is why He said, “It is finished!” Mission Accomplished! The resurrection of Christ from the dead was for God in the sense that God was putting the world on notice that His Son had done all that the Father had asked Him to do. The payment for sin was not only made, the payment for sin was accepted. God raised His Son for our justification. The resurrection of Christ was God telling the world that He was perfectly satisfied with His Son and that the purchase of our salvation was signed, sealed and delivered. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was for God in the sense that God was telling Satan and the demons, that a new day has come. The new creation has begun, a new order is taking over, and new sheriff is in town, and he cannot be defeated, destroyed, denied or defied, because even though you killed Him, the grave could not hold him. He will be reckoned with and He will reign! The resurrection of Christ was also God’s answer to the prayer of Christ in the garden to be saved from the cup of wrath. Christ was rescued through His suffering, not from suffering.

2) Christ Rose Again for you.

The life, death and resurrection of Christ are all done for God and for us. In a literal sense Christ did all of this in our place and for our benefit. When you come to faith in

Christ, you are credited with his life and death, AND at the same time you are guaranteed your resurrection because He accomplished that for you as well. “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15.22) “And if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” Romans 8.11

Much of what is known as “Christianity” believes in the resurrection of Christ, but it still teaches that you are responsible for your justification. That is NOT what the Bible says is it? If Jesus died and rose again, but I am responsible to earn God’s favor by being “good enough” then why did Christ die and what did it accomplish? What good did it do if in the end I still have to earn it? It makes no sense! No, he was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

3. How must you respond?

Romans 4:5!! Believe it! Believe that what Christ accomplished is really true and is really true for you. If you believe in the death of Christ for your sin, you will see your sin for what it really is and will turn from it. If you see the death of Christ as being completely sufficient to pay for your sin, then you will stop trusting in religious ceremonies, traditions or moral efforts to pay God off.

For those of you who are hoping that God will look kindly upon you at the end because you were semi-religious, not as bad as the other guy, or felt like you had some measure of spirituality to you; I’m shooting straight with you. If that is what your hope is in, you are toast. You have a wish, but it is no hope at all. You need a real Savior and since you are a sinner, you cannot rescue yourself. You need to stop trusting in yourself and trust only in Christ. That is what it means to become a follower of Christ. Renounce any trust in yourself or in your efforts or your “goodness.” Your good is NOT good enough. But Jesus is! Renounce your trust in yourself and trust in Christ. Believe on him and yield yourself to him.

For those of you are followers of Christ but your affections for Christ are like a roller coaster, you need to ponder this fourth point. Start at Hebrews 5 and study your high priest – Christ who never surrendered what He knew was true about the Father to the intense suffering he endured. Your circumstances do not determine your faith or obedience. Your hope is secure in the finished work of Christ on the earth, and in His ongoing ministry on your behalf before the Father. Your security is not in your keeping the rules better than others. And even when your own heart condemns you, look back at the cross and trust Christ, look at the empty tomb and acknowledge His death was sufficient, look upward to your place in Him right now, and look ahead to the day when your position in Christ is completely fulfilled in your perfected existence with Christ.

Do you see why justification by faith is the greatest doctrine ever? When God defines you, God defends you.