



Lesson 11: Justification by Faith

Justification by Faith Defined:

Justification is a judicial declaration that the sinner who has placed faith in Jesus Christ is forgiven of sin and is declared righteous in God's sight through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

R. C. Sproul says, "Justification refers to a legal action by God by which he declares a person just in his sight. The Protestant view is often described as 'forensic justification,' meaning that justification is a *legal declaration* made by God.

Catholics agree that justification occurs when God declares a person just. However, when evangelicals speak of forensic justification, the phrase is used as a kind of theological shorthand for *sola fide*, and what is tacit is the assumption that God declares people to be just in themselves are not just. Rome teaches that God declares people just only when they are in fact just. They are declared to be just only if and when justness inheres in them." (R. C. Sproul, Justified by Faith Alone, Today's Issues, Crossway Books).

Rome teaches that one is justified at baptism. This justification is lost due to any mortal sin. The second plank of justification according to their theology is *penance*.

The Council of Trent said: "Those who through sin have forfeited the received grace of justification, can again be justified when, moved by God, they exert themselves to obtain through the sacrament of penance the recovery, the merits of Christ, of the grace lost. For this manner of justification is restoration for those fallen, which the holy fathers have aptly called a second plank after the shipwreck of grace is lost." (Sproul, *ibid*, 21).

Penance included confession (act of contrition), priestly absolution, and *works of satisfaction* (this included alms/monetary gifts). Penance could tap into the Treasury of Merit deposited by Christ and added to by those given the status of saints. Merit had to be earned and gained. This is faith not only in Christ but in the merits to be gained by penance and additional grace.

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation argued the following in contrast with Rome:

1. Justification is by faith _____: not faith plus penance.
2. Justification is in _____ alone: the foundation for our justification is only what Christ has done.
3. Justification is not an _____ righteousness – to make one constitutionally righteous in and of themselves---perfectly holy without sin.
4. Justification is based upon the _____ righteousness of Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. 5:21; Philippians 3:9; Romans 4:4-5.
5. Justification puts to the credit of the believing sinner the _____ **righteousness of another – Jesus Christ**.

Faith Alone in Christ Alone = _____

Faith Alone in Christ Alone means _____ is our Righteousness:
1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:9

6. Justification grants forgiveness and removes condemnation while giving the _____ of Christ; Romans 4:6-8; 8:1; 10:4.
7. Justification is apart from the _____; Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; 3:11.
8. Justification is by grace through the _____; Titus 3:7; Romans 3:25. It is not faith in faith that justifies, but faith in Christ. Believe in Christ and His righteousness will become yours.

Justification is a Judicial Declaration (see Grudem, p. 95-96)

Justification does not *make the sinner righteous inwardly*, but rather it makes a verdict that the sinner is *declared right* in the court of divine justice.

Roman Catholicism said that righteousness is *infused* in the sinner *making them righteous* at baptism. The Protestant Reformers understood justification to be a divine declaration that the righteousness of Christ has been *imputed* – *put to the credit* of the sinner.

Romans 4:5 says Abraham was justified while being ungodly. He still had sin within but before God he was counted to be right because faith laid hold of God’s Promise.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to the sinner who puts faith in Jesus Christ!

Romans 4:4-5, “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation, However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

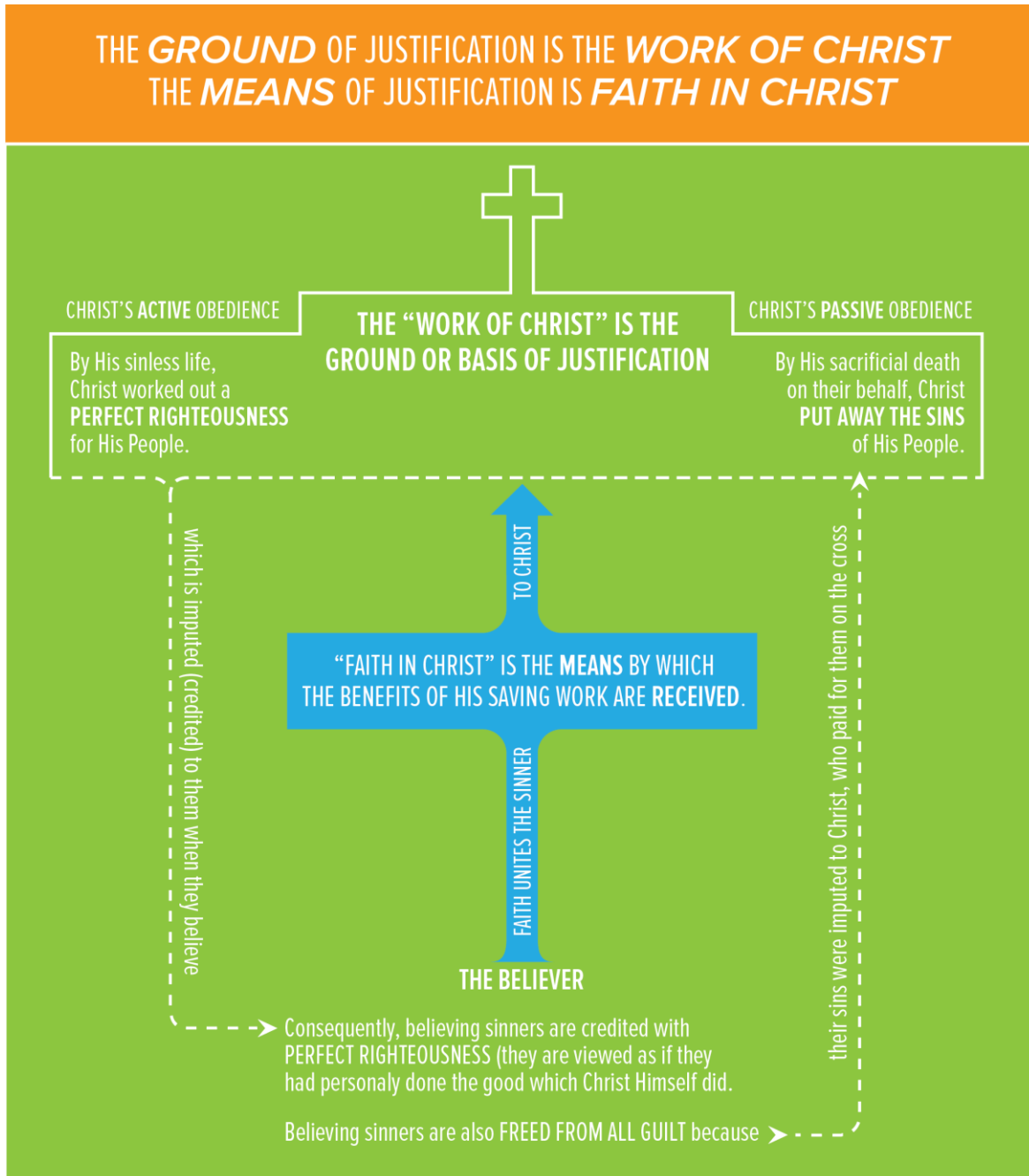
The word *reckon, count, credited* are words used in bookkeeping. . .to put to one’s account. God declares the ungodly to be right in His sight through the agency of faith. When by faith the sinner puts their trust in Jesus Christ, God the Father credits Christ’s righteousness to the sinner.

- **Active obedience** of Christ is credited to the sinner who believes:
Romans 5:18

This obedience is Christ’s sinless life and perfect adherence to God’s law. A child of God is given this kind of credit – to be perfect in Christ’s righteousness.

- **Passive obedience** of Christ is credited to the believer.

Passive obedience of Christ is used in theology to speak of the death of Christ for sin the sinner. Forgiveness is granted on the basis of Jesus Christ submitting to the Father’s will to take our place.



- Abraham was given a perfect righteousness because he believed God; Genesis 15:6; Rom. 4:4-5. David was not charged with his sins but was forgiven; Rom. 4:7-8.

To the one who believes, justification grants forgiveness of all sins for all time and credits the righteousness of Christ.

Three Great Imputations in Scripture:

- A. The sin of Adam imputed to the _____; Rom. 5:12-21.
- B. Our sins imputed to _____; 2 Corinthians 5:21.
- C. Christ’s righteousness imputed to the _____; 2 Cor. 5:21.

Scriptures teaching that Christ’s righteousness is ours by faith:

Philippians 3:9
1 Corinthians 1:30
2 Corinthians 5:21
Romans 10:4
Romans 5:12-19

Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone
In Romans

Let us follow the argument of Romans with justification in mind.

1. The Gospel offers a righteousness from God and comes through faith;
Romans 1:16-17.

“Righteousness” (Gr. Dikaios) which in Latin is “justificare;” the Latin Vulgate translation of the bible came through the French to English as “justification.”

Justification is the Divine Answer to the Question:

How can the guilty ever be right in the sight of God and God remain just or right?

Luther: why he hated Romans 1:16-17?

2. This righteousness is desperately needed for a guilty race; 1:18-3:20.

3. The righteousness offered in the Gospel is based upon the following;
3:19-27.

- Righteousness could not be attained by _____; 20.
- A righteousness apart _____ is in the gospel; 21.
- A righteousness that comes _____ in Jesus Christ; 22.
- A righteousness offered without _____;
23-24; *without a cause or freely, by grace*, unmerited favor.

What did Jesus Christ have to do to give us this righteousness?

- Pay a _____ to buy us out from our sins – redemption; 24.
- Become a _____—or a sacrifice that would appease and quench the anger of God against our sins.
- Shed _____: die a vicious and vicarious death.

Why did Jesus Christ have to die such a death?

- God demanded _____ and He demonstrated His _____ in the death of His perfect and sinless Son; 3:25.
- God _____ before the cross in anticipation that it would be fully paid at the cross; 3:25-26.
- God protected His _____ by the death of Jesus Christ. The cross work of Christ enabled the Father to show grace and mercy to guilty sinners and not _____. Justice has been _____ with the payment by Christ for sin for all time.
- _____ is excluded for it is all of God; 3:27.
- _____ and _____ are excluded in justification; 3:27-28.

Over and over in Galatians and Romans the Law of Moses is shown incapable of justifying or saving anyone. God’s law can prove us guilty but never declare us righteous.

The Righteousness Declared in Justification Imputed to the Believer: Romans 4

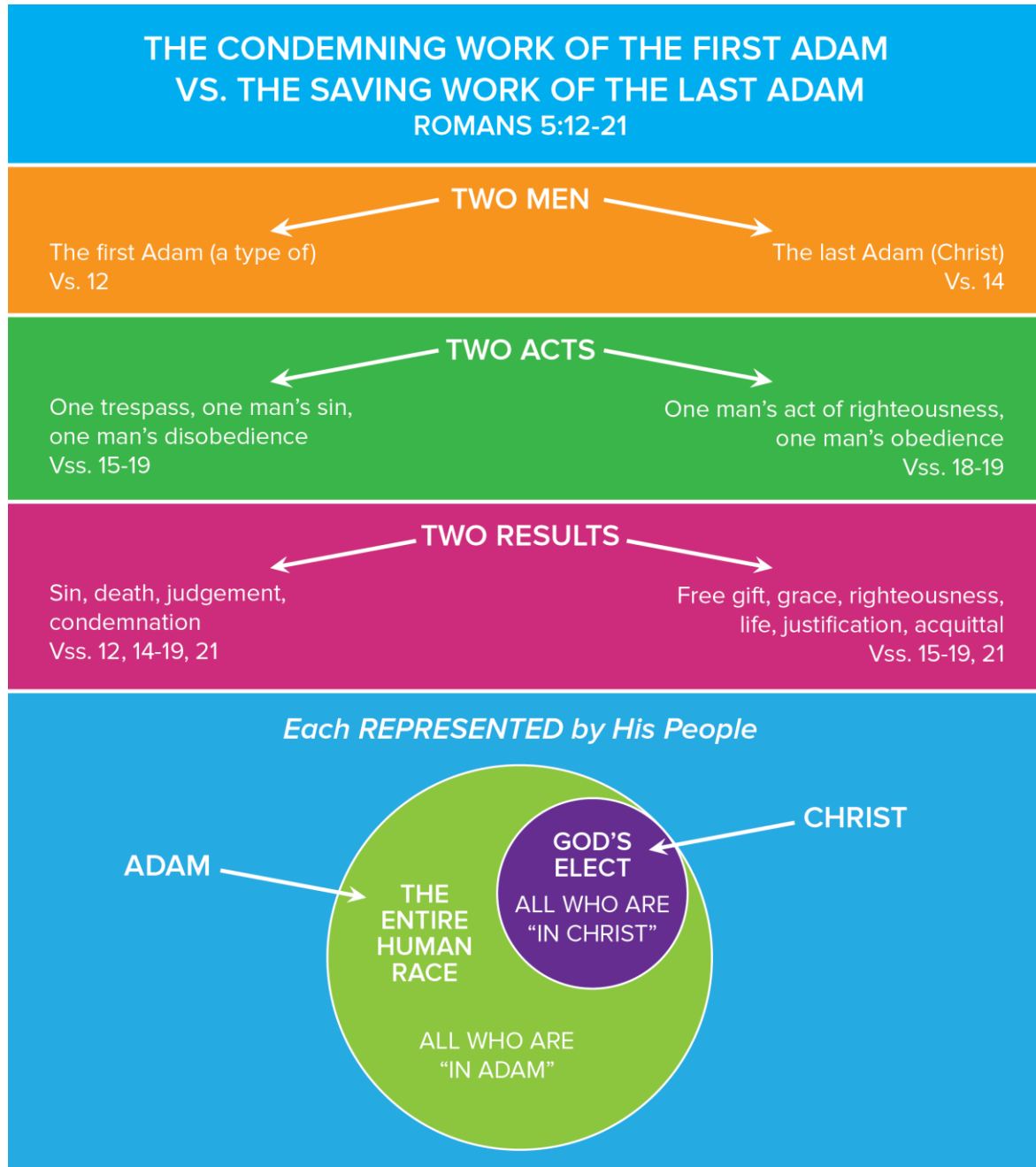
This is illustrated in Abraham and David.

The Results of Being Declared Righteous by God: 5:1-11

Two Representatives for All of History: 5:12-21

Adam represents the human race as guilty sinners.

Jesus Christ represents all who put faith in Him.



Next Week: Easter Break – Class Dismissed on Wed, April 1st

Wednesday, April 8th – Lesson 12 - Adoption



Break Out Session – Lesson 11

Group Discussion Background

In each of our break out sessions we will probe three aspects of the truths presented during each class through a series of discussion questions as described below.

WHAT: What is the key informational content?

SO WHAT: What is the implication of this information? Or said another way, why is the truth of this information important?

WHAT NOW: How will you apply this truth or what will you do now that you know this truth?

Our goal for these classes is not simply to increase our knowledge, but for lives to be transformed by truth. (Romans 12:2)

Discussion Questions: (25 minutes)

Ask the group at least 2-3 of the following questions and allow the group to thoroughly explore and discuss.

1. In the teaching and homework related to justification, was there anything you heard or studied that created a question in your mind or was difficult to understand?
2. Does God's justification make us inherently just or rather are we declared righteous or just? (Romans 4:4-5) What is the foundation of our justification? (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9)
3. Were there any key insights you observed about justification and what Jesus Christ did and what we must do to have a righteous standing before God? (Romans 1:16-17, 3:19-27)
4. Have you been justified (declared just or not guilty by God in the court of Heaven and been given the free gift of Christ's righteousness)? Was this by faith alone or by works? Is this justification before God a completed act or something we must maintain (Romans 8:30)?

Time to Care – Share – Bear (15 minutes)

During this time, the group is encouraged to share in each other's lives and demonstrate care for one another by bearing one another up through prayer.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Answer any remaining questions and clarify the homework for the following week.



Lesson 11 Homework

1. Read Grudem, Chapter 8 on Adoption, pgs. 107-115.
2. Answer Question #1 on pg. 113: Look back over the list of privileges that come with our adoption as God's children. Had you previously thought of these as automatically yours because you had been born again? Can you describe what our eternal life would be like if we had regeneration and justification and many of the other privileges that come with salvation, but no adoption into God's family? Now how do you feel about the fact that God has adopted you into his family compared with the way you felt before reading this chapter?
3. Answer Question #2 on pg. 113: Has your relationship with your own human family become better or more difficult as a result of your becoming a Christian? If your relationship with your earthly family has become more difficult, how have you found Mark 10:29-30 to be true in your life as a Christian?
4. Be prepared to discuss your answer to Question #4 on pg. 114 in your small groups: Think of the people who are members of your church. Has this chapter helped you to think of them more as your brothers and sisters (or if they are older, as those who are like "fathers" and "mothers" to you)? How do you think an added appreciation of this idea of the church as a family would be helpful to your church? How could you encourage a greater appreciation of this idea?