

SECTION THREE : JUSTIFIED (MADE RIGHTEOUS)

22. WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE

Many believers struggle with a sense of unworthiness, guilt, shame, and condemnation before God. It is true that as sinners, we are unfit, unworthy, guilty, ashamed, and condemned before God. However, the identity of the new creation has been changed by God Himself. He has moved us from darkness to light, from being afar off to being brought near, from being condemned sinners to being justified saints.

As we have emphasized, we must embrace our new identity in Christ. One part of this new identity in Christ is that we are justified and made righteous in God's sight, and He invites us to live free from all guilt, shame, and condemnation before Him. This is what we will uncover and establish from the Word of God in this section. Receiving revelation of this truth will release us from all feelings of unworthiness, guilt, shame, and condemnation and make us confident toward God and fearless toward the devil.

Ephesians 1:4

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

Even before the foundation of the world, God determined to have a family of people who would be holy and without blame before Him, because of His love and covered by His love. We will study the "holy" aspect in the next section.

The words "without blame" simply means faultless, blameless, unblameable, without blemish, and without spot. This is how God sees us – blameless.

Colossians 1:20-22

20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

We were once enemies, now we have been reconciled to God and are friends of God. This was possible because of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross. And because

of the finished work of Christ on the Cross, today we are holy, blameless and above reproach in His sight!

The words "above reproach" (as seen in other versions) means to be unaccused, unimpeachable, innocent, without anything that would make you guilty before Him, faultless, without charge. What a privilege God Himself has blessed us with in Christ!

How does God view you? What does God think about you? The answer is that God sees you as someone who is blameless and flawless in His sight!

23. ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED

Ephesians 1:6

to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

The phrase "*..He made us accepted..*" literally means to grant special honor, to be highly favored, to cover with grace, to surround with favor, to honor with blessings

One version renders this phrase as: "*...He has made us objects of His grace in the Beloved Son;*" (AFV, A Faithful Version)

Say this out loud: Father I thank you that in Christ I have been granted special honor, I am highly favored, I am covered with grace, surrounded with favor, honored with blessings, an object of your grace!

The Beloved, is Jesus Christ, whom the Scriptures refer to as the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13) and whom the Father called His Beloved Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

You are not hated, accused, shamed, or condemned! In the Beloved, in Christ, you are loved, accepted, honored, and favored!

You are not hated. In Christ, you are loved by God.

You are not accused. In Christ, you are accepted by God.

You are not shamed. In Christ, you are honored by God.

You are not condemned. In Christ, you are favored before God.

For some this may be 'too good to be true'. We find it hard to embrace this Biblical truth.

Some strangely may be in bondage to a religious stronghold of self-condemnation. Hence, we prefer being under a sense of guilt, shame, and condemnation. It gives us a

false sense of remorse that makes us feel deeply spiritual. This religious stronghold causes us to enjoy emotional self-flagellation. We whip ourselves emotionally, telling ourselves how unfit, unworthy, we are, flogging ourselves and inflicting emotional pain, and thus feel good that we have done this as some form of appeasement to God. Such spiritual bondage prevents us from embracing the truth that we are loved, accepted, honored, and justified by God freely by His grace! May the Lord deliver us from such religious bondage.

And why did God do this for us? The Scripture above states “*..to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which....*” By His grace and for the praise of His marvelous grace, He made us loved, accepted, honored, and justified in Jesus Christ. All He invites us to do is to receive it and praise Him for what He has done!

24. WASHED, SANCTIFIED, JUSTIFIED

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

The Corinthian believers were brought out from a notoriously wicked background. The apostle Paul emphatically reminds them that this was something of the past: “Such were some of you”. This is behind us. Not of the present, but of the past. This is not who you are today!

The apostle Paul calls out who they are today – washed, sanctified, and justified!

This is who we are. We are people who have been washed, sanctified, and justified!

Washed! Made clean. All the dirt and filth of sin has been removed.

Sanctified! Set apart for God and His purposes. We are hallowed objects. Holy!

Justified! Acquitted, declared not guilty, completely forgiven, made innocent, made just-as-if-I-never-sinned. No more charges against us. Unimpeachable.

There are two New Testament words we need to become familiar with: justified and righteous. Both these words come from the same Greek root word. To be justified is to be acquitted, declared not guilty, made free of all charges. This puts us in right standing with God. We are now righteous before God. We have the quality of being right in His sight. To be justified is to be made righteous. Hence, we use these words synonymously.

As believers we have been washed and justified, made righteous, put in right standing before God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit.

Let us explore the truth of justification (being made righteous) in Christ, further.

25. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

An important truth to understand is that the righteousness we have as new creation is not only God given, but it is God's very own. The righteousness that He is, is what has been given to us.

If God's righteousness could be visualized as a spotless white robe that He wears, then that same spotless white robe has been given to every believer. Every child of God stands clothed in God's spotless white robe.

If God's righteousness could be imagined as a perfectly pure quality of being, then that pure quality of being has been imparted to us in our spirit, when we were born again and became a new creation in Christ.

Romans 3:22

Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

1 Corinthians 1:30

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (GNB)

Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God—God’s own righteousness has been imparted to all and is on all who believe in Jesus Christ.

In Christ, Christ the sinless, spotless One, Himself became our righteousness.

The righteousness we have been given is the righteousness of God.

Trying to understand and embrace this truth stretches our mental and spiritual comprehension. How can such a thing be possible? But we embrace it, and begin to act as it is the truth, because the Word of God presents this to us.

We have become the righteousness of God, in Christ. This is what qualifies us to fellowship with God. God cannot fellowship, have close communion, intimate friendship with anything that is not ‘on par’ with His own righteousness. The only way we could be brought into this place to enjoy fellowship with Him, is by Him bestowing to us His own righteousness. We have fellowship with the God-Head, with the Father, with the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Righteousness, as we will see later includes three aspects: right standing, right nature and right behavior. We have been made the righteousness of God containing all these.

26. JUSTIFIED AND RIGHTEOUS THROUGH FAITH

All we did was to believe, to receive. This righteousness is received through faith in Christ.

Romans 3:22

Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference.

This has been given to all and on all who believe. That is all that was required.

Romans 5:1-2

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We have been justified by faith.

This Scripture portion also points us to some of the outcomes of being justified by faith:

We now have peace with God.

We have access by faith before God.

We stand in a place of grace before the Father.

We are full of joy because of the hope (expectation) of the glory of God.

As a personal word, the apostle Paul expresses his complete reliance on the righteousness that we have received from God through faith in Jesus Christ. This alone qualifies us to fellowship with God, to stand unashamed in His presence and qualifies us for heaven.

Philippians 3:8, 9

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

27. JUSTIFIED AND RIGHTEOUS FREELY BY HIS GRACE

Romans 3:24

being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Titus 3:4–7

**4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

We have been justified freely by His grace. There is nothing we could do or can do now or ever in the future, to earn, deserve or merit this place of being in right standing with God.

Here again, we could have been misguided by religious teaching that somehow makes our acceptance before God merit based. Perhaps based on the merit of a holy life.

Perhaps based on the merit of sacrifices that were made or how much we have prayed, etc. A works-based mindset tends to measure our standing before God on the merit of good things that are done. However, no amount of good works can make us righteous in His sight. Our best works are like filthy garments (Isaiah 64:6).

It is just grace and all grace through which He has freely lavished us with this wonderful blessing of being justified and righteous in His own eyes. All we did was to receive His free gift of grace.

28. JUSTIFIED AND RIGHTEOUS BY HIS BLOOD

Romans 3:24-25

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, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.

Romans 5:9

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Colossians 1:20-21

20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

God was able to justify us and declare us righteous freely by His grace, because of the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross and the blood He shed as a price for the full and complete cleansing for sin.

The shed blood announces that a death has occurred and the price for sin has been fully paid. In this case, it was the death of the Sinless One for the sinful, as our Substitute. He took our place and He bore our penalty. His blood shed. His life given. Atonement made. Judgement complete. Justice satisfied. The guilty acquitted. Forgiven. Justified. Made righteous. Christ was raised announcing our justification (Romans 4:25). All by grace!

As a side note, it is interesting to observe in Romans 3:25, Christ was set as a propitiation. That word propitiation in the Greek means mercy seat. The same Greek word is translated mercy seat in Hebrews 9:5. The mercy seat in the Old Testament was

the place where God met with His people and where atonement for sin was made for people to be reconciled to God (Exodus 25:21-22; Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:14-15). Christ became our “Mercy Seat,” the One through whom we are reconciled to God because of His redemptive work.

Practical Implications Of Being Justified And Made Righteous

So, what effect does being justified and righteous have in the life of the believer? How do we live out of this new identity and inheritance that we have been given in Christ?

We will list them out as

- There is no condemnation against us and so we live free from any sense of guilt, shame, accusation, or condemnation.
- We have boldness to enter in God’s presence and live a life of intimate continual fellowship with Him.
- We reign in life and exert dominion over life’s situations brought about by sin, sickness and satan.
- We confront satan as king and master over him and his demons.
- We are careful to maintain continual fellowship with the Lord by abiding in this place of righteousness.

Let us look at each of these.

29. NO CONDEMNATION

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

What a joy to know that there is no condemnation against us because we are in Christ Jesus.

The word condemnation means adverse sentence, condemning verdict, guilty judgment, guilty conviction. There is no such thing against the believer in Christ.

Satan is called the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10-11). One of his strategies is to bring thoughts of accusation and condemnation against the believer. Satan is a liar, the father of lies. He continually lies to the believer accusing us before our God, stating that we are hated by God, that for some reason God is upset, angry, mad about us. He

reminds us about our failures, mistakes and wrongdoing and uses these to make us feel guilty, ashamed, accused, and condemned before God.

But we must look to the truth of God's Word. God has declared there is no condemnation against us. His Word says that there can be no charge against God's elect.

Romans 8:33-34

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

There is no one, not even satan who can bring an accusation against us. God the great Judge is the One who has justified us and condemned satan. The One who released us from all charges is at the right hand of God, declaring our acquittal. What a win!

Romans 3:26

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

What a thought! God is the Judge. The Judge has declared us acquitted. God is also our Defense. And He has already acquitted us!

We can reject satan's accusations against us. Our God the great Judge has acquitted us. We live free from any sense of guilt, shame, accusation, or condemnation. We are free!

No more court cases to fight! You do not need to go to the courts of heaven to fight your case against the devil. The verdict was announced two thousand years ago. Satan was judged and condemned (John 16:11). We were declared righteous in Christ. There is no more accusing voice, no adverse judgement, no guilty conviction, against us in Christ Jesus.

This is how the Passion Translation renders Romans 8:1:

Romans 8:1 (The Passion Translation)

So now the case is closed. There remains no accusing voice of condemnation against those who are joined in life-union with Jesus, the Anointed One.

30. BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

Ephesians 2:13,18

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 3:12

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Because God has made us righteous with His own righteousness, we can now come boldly with confidence into His presence to ask of Him. We are not trying to sneak our way into God presence based on our own works. Neither are we trying to enter into God's presence with a 'poor me', have pity on me, attitude. Neither our works, neither our poverty will impress God or grants us entry into the presence of God. The only thing that qualifies us to enter His presence in His gift of righteousness. Hence it is an expression of our humility and gratitude in accepting His work and entering His presence boldly with confidence based on His gift of righteousness.

When we come before God in prayer or worship we come without any sense of guilt, shame or condemnation. We come knowing that we are washed, justified, blameless, without fault, accepted, welcomed, favored, and honored in His presence. We are the righteousness of God in Christ. We ask with boldness and confidence knowing who He has made us be to Himself. He has adopted us as His sons and daughters.

We reject all accusations of the enemy that try to keep us under a cloud of guilt, shame, and condemnation.

As we mentioned earlier, some of us may inherently be inclined to self-condemnation and self-accusation. The apostle John addresses this in his first epistle.

1 John 3:20-21

20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

The apostle John is teaching us to live free from self-condemnation. We must maintain a heart that does not condemn us, since this is what enables us to have confidence

toward God. Walking in love, walking in righteousness gives us confidence before Him (1 John 3:18-19). However, if our heart still condemns us, we must remember that God is greater than our heart and God knows all things, that is, God knows the truth. So, we must learn to look at things from God's perspective and embrace what He sees about us, since He is greater than our self-condemning heart. Learn to tell your own voice that condemns and accuses you to be silent and let God's voice, the voice of the One who is greater than your own self-condemnation be the voice you listen to. God knows who you are in Christ. He put you there. He knows all things.

Another important passage to consider in this context is in Hebrews 10:

Hebrews 10:19-22

**19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,
21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

We have boldness to enter the Holiest because of the blood of Jesus. We have been washed, justified, and made righteous. However, we must draw near with full assurance of faith, with boldness and confidence. Our hearts must be sprinkled or washed from an evil conscience, that is the voice of self-condemnation. The Word of God and the work of the Spirit is water that cleanses our inner person (John 15:3; John 17:17, Titus 3:5). Embrace the Word and the revelation of truth the Holy Spirit imparts to wash your heart from a self-condemning, self-afflicting voice. Let your heart be one where there is full assurance, boldness and confidence through faith, to enter His presence. This is the way God wants us to come before Him into the Holiest.

31. REIGNING IN LIFE BECAUSE OF THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 5:17

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Adam through his sin brought us into a place of judgment and a place of subjection to sin, satan, and death. Through Christ we have been justified and brought out of subjection to sin, satan and death. He gave us His gift of righteousness. The gift of righteousness announces that we are no longer where Adam placed us through his

offense. We are where Christ has placed us through His obedience and victorious redemptive work.

The gift of righteousness qualifies us to reign in life, that is, to have mastery over everything that Adam subjected us to. Through Jesus Christ, we walk in mastery over sin, sickness and satan, as people who have been given God's abundant grace and the gift of righteousness.

We are kings and priests in Jesus Christ. We have been washed, sanctified, and justified to be kings and priests. The gift of righteousness not only qualifies us to be priests before God, but it has positioned us to be kings on earth.

Romans 5:18

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Romans 5:18 (TPT)

In other words, just as condemnation came upon all people through one transgression, so through one righteous act of Jesus' sacrifice, the perfect righteousness that makes us right with God and leads us to a victorious life is now available to all.

The end of the verse "resulting in justification of life" literally means justification which results in life. Justification results in life, the 'zoe' God-kind of life, the victorious, abundant life of God.

32. THE ARMOR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Ephesians 6:13-14

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

2 Corinthians 6:7

by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

Righteousness is part of our spiritual armor against satan and his demonic forces. IT guards our core, our heart. Hence when we embrace this truth of us having become the righteousness of God in Christ, we are well protected. We are covered on all sides, the left and the right. We march with confidence against satan because we have something that satan does not. We have the gift of righteousness. Satan and his demons cannot penetrate past this armor of righteousness. You stand with absolute confidence, with a sense of absolute mastery and dominion over satan and his demons. You are the righteousness of God.

Demons believe in God and tremble in God's presence (James 2:19). We who have the gift of righteousness, believe in God and rejoice in His presence.

33. FELLOWSHIP IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

We must understand that there are three aspects with regards to the new creation being made the righteousness of God:

One has to do with right standing before God, a standing where there is no condemnation. The new creation is in right standing with God.

Second has to do with the quality of being right, having to do with nature and character, being a righteous and just person by nature. The new creation is created in the image of God with the nature of righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24).

Third has to do with the action and behavior that is right before God, being a person who does righteously and justly. The new creation desires to walk righteously before God.

The new creation is righteous and justified and includes all three aspects of righteousness. Hence as a new creation in Christ, you act justly because you are just. You walk in righteousness because you are righteous.

However, the soul and the body need to be brought in subjection to the new creation. And there are times, when the pull of the desires of the soul and flesh are stronger, and we do what is unrighteous. We sin (James 1:14-16).

Sin is sin and must be acknowledged.

1 John 1:7-9

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The beautiful truth is that if we sin, we confess and immediately receive His cleansing from all unrighteousness, known and unknown. If all unrighteousness is cleansed, then righteousness remains. We walk in righteousness without any sense of accusation, guilt, shame, or condemnation.

In Christ, we are justified and righteous. We have become the righteousness of God.

Say this out loud:

God justified and made me righteous, freely by His grace and because of Christ's work on the Cross. This qualifies me to live joyfully without any sense of condemnation, to fellowship with my God freely and intimately, to boldly ask of Him, to reign over life's matters and to confront satan as a king and master.