

# Justification

## (1) Justification is a *verdict*

- *illustration*: at end of trial, verdict rendered | legal declaration
- to be justified is to be declared righteous

## We all need justification | we all need a verdict

- Harold Abrams, “I have 10 seconds to justify my whole existence”

## (2) What is our justification based on?

- good news of gospel – not based on our moral performance

### Romans 3:20-22

<sup>20</sup> For **by works of the law no human being will be justified** in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – <sup>22</sup> **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe.

## Therefore, we are justified sinners!

- Martin Luther – *simul justus et peccatur*
- “simultaneously justified and sinful”

### Luke 18:9-14

<sup>9</sup> Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.**”

### Galatians 2:16

We know that a **person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ**, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

## (3) Justification is *double imputation*

- “impute” – to credit or attribute | *illustration*: account ledger

## We typically think that the gospel is only single imputation

- our sins are imputed to Christ on cross
- but that would not be enough | “gospel is a second chance”
- *illustration*: governor pardons criminal

## The gospel is double imputation

- our sins are imputed to Christ
- *and* Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us

### 2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## *Illustration: Gattaca*

## (4) What is role of faith? | faith is empty hand that receives the gift

### Romans 4:1-3

<sup>1</sup> What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham **believed** God, and it was **counted to him as righteousness.**”

## (5) The dispute with Roman Catholicism

- this is the central conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism

### James 2:14 - 26

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father **justified by works** when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” – and he was called a friend of God.

<sup>24</sup> You see that **a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.**

<sup>25</sup> And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

<sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

### “Not by faith alone”

- distinction between “dead faith” and “true faith”

### “A person is justified by works”

- good works is not basis of our justification, but the result

### Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith** – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – <sup>9</sup> **not by works**, so that no one can boast.

### Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1990)

Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man. Justification detaches man from sin which contradicts the love of God, and purifies his heart of sin.”

### Westminster Confession of Faith (chapter 10, section 1)

Those whom God effectually calls, He also freely justifies; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.