

Justified

#0025

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 26, 1971

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” Acts 13:38–39.

The heaviest burden that anyone ever carries is the burden of sin. No financial trouble, no health problem, or no problem with other people can compare with this problem.

The burden of guilt is one of the greatest reasons that tranquilizers by the *tons* are being swallowed today. This is one of the great reasons why people go after alcohol and tobacco, and a hundred other drugs. This is one of the great reasons people watch TV and listen to the radio, and run to this amusement and that. They do not like what happens when they are alone and everything is quiet. The guilty conscience prods, spurs, irritates. And so anything to quiet it.

My dear friends, there is only one answer. It is to be *justified* before God. It is to be acquitted, cleared of the charge of sin. Well, how can a sinner ever have that? That’s what I want to study with you tonight.

The worst sinner, the vilest sinner, the deepest-dyed sinner can be justified by this; he can be accounted righteous. He can be acquitted. He can stand clear before the law of God.

How can it be done?

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” *Ibid.*

There are four things about this matter of being justified that I want to study with you, all from the Scriptures. Each one of these four points is centered in a *word*. And you’ll notice these words as we proceed with them.

The first we’ll find in the epistle to Titus:

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the

kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but
according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of
regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He
shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs
according to the hope of eternal life” Titus 3:3–7.

We are justified by God's grace. That's the answer to the sin problem. This is the *source* of our justification. What does grace mean? It means love going beyond the ordinary. It means *mercy* to someone who doesn't deserve it at all.

God loves the sinless angels in Heaven, but He's never given them grace. They don't need it. But you and I, poor sinners down here in this world, *we need grace*. If we're going to get anything worthwhile, we need to get what we *don't* deserve instead of what we *do* deserve.

This is the ground of being *justified*, in other words. The man who has broken the law of God, who deserves to die, he comes to God, and he pleads not for justice, but for mercy. If he's going to get any help, it has to be through *grace*. But God is a God of grace. He *loves* to be gracious. That is one of His names as He revealed Himself to Moses there at Mount Sinai.

“The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious,
longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth”
Exodus 34:6.

My dear friend, the reason why sinners fear to come to God when they want help is that they don't *know* His character. They do not realize how loving He is. They do not realize how tenderhearted He is. He loves us. He wants us.

Someone says, “Oh, how could He want me? I'm such a sinner.”

Well, He loves sinners so much that He left everybody else in the universe that were not sinners and came where sinners were. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

So our hope of being justified is in the grace of God. It is not in something that we *have* done or *can* do. We have *nothing* to recommend us to God.

If any of you here tonight are feeling bad and feeling doubtful and feeling worried, wondering whether or not God can accept you because of something you have done or something you have failed to do; I encourage you to come to God and venture on His grace, His mercy, His loving kindness. As the song says:

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade.
To write the love of God above

Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

But it's not enough to believe that in a general sense that God loves people, and that His love is as great as that song says. It's all true, but it's not enough. You and I must sense that God loves us *personally* that way. That His grace... may I put it to you this way: He can't be any other way. He can't be any other way.

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" John 6:37.

That is that there is *no possibility* of casting him out.

Now, let's turn over to Romans the 3rd chapter, verses 23 and 24. We'll read another verse on this matter of grace; it's involved in justification:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption
that is in Christ Jesus" Romans 3:23–24.

What's the second word of the 23rd verse? All. Well, does that leave anybody out? Does that include everybody that's listening tonight? *Every* one. "For *all* have what? "Sinned." Do you believe that? All right. Then we're all in this together. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified," what's the next word? "freely," and then what's the next three words? "by His grace." Over in Titus, Paul says we're justified by His grace; here in Romans, he says we're justified *freely* by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Thank God friends, He doesn't do it grudgingly. If He did, He wouldn't do it at *all*. When the prodigal came home and the father didn't say, "Well, son, maybe we could find a place for you out in the barn, or up in the attic somewhere." No, no. At *once*, he was *fully* received, *freely* accepted, *fully* justified. Why? Because that was the father's character. The son was a miserable sinner, a failure, and he knew it; the boy recognized that. But friends, he did not fully understand what a wonderful father he had.

Those who know God the best still have an *eternity* to explore the grace of God. We're going to be singing it through the eternal ages—marvelous grace, marvelous grace. And remember, grace is getting what we don't deserve. Why? Because God is that way. He's a great giver. He's a great *forgiver*. He loves to pardon. He delights in mercy. Why not let Him do what He loves to do, friends.

[Audience sings "Grace Greater than Our Sin."]

God is not only merciful: He is *just*. He has His law to think of, with which is bound up the peace and order of the universe. He has His creatures to think of—the angels and the inhabitants of all the worlds. How can God be *just* and justify a man that is *unjust*? That's the great problem.

And God has solved that in the only way an infinite God could find—by the sacrifice of His *own* life in Christ to provide the ransom for our sins. God is no judge fixing a traffic ticket because a friend of his has broken the law. Oh, no. God is the One, the only One in the universe who could do it. God *Himself* has sacrificed *His* life to suffer what we deserve. So when God (watch this) sets the sentence that I deserve aside, when He sees me in all my guilt, and sets aside that guilt and says I am free from guilt, it is because He takes that penalty, that guilt upon Himself in Christ.

What did that do? That broke the heart of the Son of God. The blood that was shed on Calvary is the fountain where you and I may wash and be clean. When God declares us *just*, it is not only because He is merciful and loving and longs to forgive. It is that He recognizes the *fact* that took place at Calvary: that is all we deserve to suffer has been suffered by Christ upon the cross. Therefore it is to His blood at the cross we look as the *ground* of our justification. His grace provides that offering.

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” Romans 5:8–9.

We’re justified by what? By blood. By Whose blood? *His* blood—The blood of Christ.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself”
2 Corinthians 5:19

And so when I come to the law and I see that I’m condemned as a transgressor, for sin is the transgression of the law; when I see that I deserve to die, for the wages of sin is death, then I look to Calvary and see there on the cross Someone suffering all that I deserve. Someone bearing my sins, my guilt, until the awful load breaks His heart. It is the blood of His cross that reconciles me to God. And (don’t miss this, and I repeat it that we may emphasize it) it is because Christ has paid the ransom that God can be just and still justify me. His is no weak, sentimental setting aside the law. Nothing of the kind. Notice:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”
Romans 3:23–26.

Do you see then that the blood of Jesus Christ makes it possible for the Judge of all the earth to do what He longs to do in exercising His grace without setting His law aside? He does not, in the slightest degree, lessen the claims of justice. That

which the law demands *Christ* has fulfilled. He has lived the righteous life that the law calls for, and then He has laid that life down at Calvary as the payment for your failures and mine.

So the grace of God finds a way through the blood of Christ to freely pardon all who come. Isn't it a wonderful plan, dear friends?

Now, the next point: *How* do we lay hold of this?

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” Romans 3:28.

In other words, here's a sinner who has never kept the law. Can he be justified? Yes. He can be justified by what? By faith. Now notice: it isn't *faith* that makes him worthy. It's the *blood* that makes him worthy. It isn't *faith* that provides the justification. It is the *grace of God* that provides it. It is the *blood* that makes it possible. But *faith* is the hand through which we reach out and *take* the gift of God. Faith is the *response* of man's choice to the offer of the Deity.

Oh friend, without faith it is impossible to accept the gift. Do you have faith? Do you *believe* your heavenly Father? Notice as we read on:

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” Romans 4:1–3.

What was counted to Abraham for righteousness? His belief in God. That's faith.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” Romans 4:4–5.

Faith is what enables us to lay *hold* upon this justification, this *wonderful* gift.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” Romans 5:1.

Anyone who has felt the load of sin and then felt it roll off knows what Paul is talking about here. But friend, don't forget these first two words on the chart tonight. Because listen: if you get to thinking that your faith *merits* justification, you've missed the whole point. You'll get weak and discouraged. Your faith is simply laying hold of God's provision from His grace through the blood of Christ to save you. That's all faith is. Faith is saying, “Lord, I see that You love me. I see that Jesus died for me. I *accept* the precious gift. I thank Thee that it is mine. I know it's mine. I *know* that it is for me and I accept it. I believe it.” This is how we are justified by faith.

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” James 2:17–22.

How does James propose to show his faith? By works. Do you think a dead faith could save anyone? Come now, do you? Why, no. Was not Abraham our father justified by works? Faith was made perfect by works.

Now I must tell you something interesting: Martin Luther didn't like this at all. He was ready to pitch the book of James out of the Bible. He said it was an epistle of straw. If I may say it humbly, but confidently, I wish Martin Luther was here tonight; I'd like to have him hear this study. I'd like to have him see how Paul and James are *perfectly* in harmony. Every one of us needs to get this just as *clear* as can be. Perfectly clear. We're going to need it for the future, and we need it right now.

Paul says in Romans, the fourth chapter, that Abraham was justified by faith. James says in James, the second chapter, that Abraham was justified by works. The two are not contrary at all. They are supplementary. Works are the evidence of the faith that lays hold upon the blood of Christ supplied by God's grace.

Faith in the blood of Christ is the root. Works are the fruit. A tree is known by its fruit. Works are the result. The grace of Christ applying the merits of the blood of Jesus to the heart that lays hold by faith that grace works in us, and by His grace, we work it out.

Keep in mind that the whole purpose of the plan of salvation is to get the *sin* out of the road so that sin is no longer a barrier between man and God. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). He, Christ, was manifested to take away our sins (1 John 3:5). Therefore, you can see that the work of Jesus is to give a way so that we are brought back into harmony with God.

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” James 2:21–23.

Abraham believed God enough to know that God would do what *God* had promised: to forgive his sins and cover him with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and he believed Him enough to go ahead and do what God said.

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,
and not by faith only” James 2:24.

I want you to see that Paul says the same thing. Paul is not even *beginning* to suggest that works are not important. He wants us to see that works are not the ground of our hope. They are the *fruit* of faith.

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” Titus 3:4–8.

Paul is not against James, and James is not against Paul. The two inspired apostles and prophets are telling us the same message, one from one angle and one from another.

Paul, the greatest apostle of justification by faith, is telling Titus to tell the people about the grace of God. Tell them about the blood of Christ which cleanses them from all sins. Tell them about the faith which lays hold of the precious gift.

But don't stop there.

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works” Titus 3:8.

If any man comes along and talks about being justified simply by believing, and that works don't amount to anything, do you not see that he is contradicting both James and Paul, and is contradicting the Bible?

There is no lie so bad as a half-truth. Thank God, we want the whole truth. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What do you say?

By this man, Jesus, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. We don't have to carry the load. By Him we can be justified from all things. *Every* sin can be forgiven, *every* guilt lifted, *every* load taken away.

How is it done? It is done through the grace of God. He is loving, merciful. He *delights* in pardoning. He's *hunting* to find some way to take the load of guilt away from us. He *wants* to do it. He'll do anything to do it. And He has proved that

by giving Himself in Jesus to pay the debt for our sins. Upon the cross He died to take away our sin. He died that the burden of guilt might be lifted.

The Lord has laid on *Him* the iniquity of us all. And the condemned sinner, looking at Calvary, can say, "Oh, I see that my debt has been paid and my sins have been paid for by the precious blood of Jesus. And now by faith, I lay hold of that. By faith, I grasp that gift of pardon and forgiveness. By faith, I accept the offering of Jesus to die in my stead, to take the load of guilt upon His heart, and I go free."

By faith, that sinner, who has placed his sins upon the Savior, walks in the way of obedience. Thus his faith is made perfect.

Not that works (don't miss it) gives him merit on which to base his hope. Oh, no. The hope of the sinner for the past, for the present, for the future, is always in that wonderful gift of grace: the righteousness of Jesus freely ours.

Wouldn't it be too bad to keep doing the thing that broke the Savior's heart? Could that be called faith?

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" Romans 3:31.

So friends, James and Paul are both in agreement.

Thank God, through His grace and by His blood, through faith we lay hold of that gift of righteousness, and *believe* that as we confess our sins, He forgives us. And *then* we believe that that same blood will give us the power to not do those sins again. What do you say? All right.

Now, do you know what I'd like to have for just a few minutes? I'd like to have a stream of people who would come by here and in just a sentence or two, each one say it in your own way, your thanks to God for the wonderful gift of God's grace, the precious blood of Jesus, that by faith you lay hold of. Wouldn't you like to come up here and one by one, give your words of praise and thanksgiving? Yesterday was Thanksgiving Day; this is thanksgiving night, friend. What do you say?

Oh, the wonderful gift of God in Christ, to take our sins away. What is your response? Now those who wish to speak will you come right up and sit here on the front seat.

[Testimony and thanksgiving service follow]

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