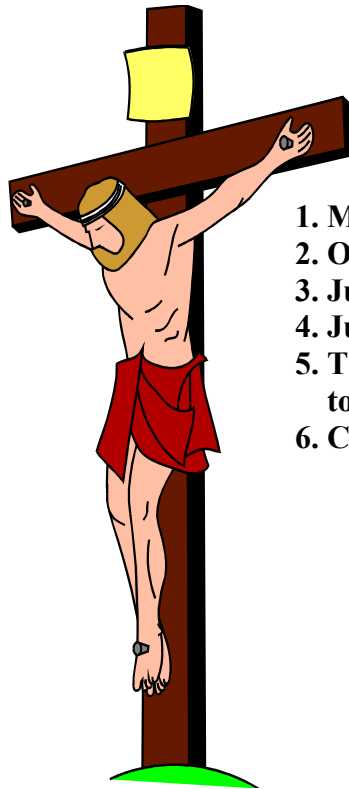


Justification



- 1. Man: A Responsible Being**
- 2. Obedience versus Disobedience**
- 3. Justification by Works of Law**
- 4. Justification by Grace Through Faith**
- 5. Terms that Identify Our Relationship to God**
- 6. Continued Justification**

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Lesson One**"Man: A Responsible Being"**

Have you noticed that people have a tendency to blame others for the things that they do wrong? We get it "honestly" (as the saying goes) from our first parents—**Adam & Eve!** **Adam** blamed **Eve** whom God has given to him and **Eve** blamed the serpent. They were unwilling to accept the responsibility that was theirs. One of the great principles of life that we need to learn is that we are responsible for the choices that we make. Otherwise, God has no basis for punishing us! God made this very clear to Adam and Eve when he faced them with their wrong choices and let them experience the consequences of their choice. God said that they would die in the day they ate of the forbidden fruit. Satan contradicted God and said they would not die. They chose to believe a lie rather than the truth. So, that very day they found themselves "separated" from God—which is spiritual death (Eph. 2:1, 5). Driving them from the Garden made this very clear. (Gen. 3:1-24).

EMPHASIS UPON MAN HAVING A CHOICE

Emphasis upon man as a "being of choice" can be found from Genesis to Revelation! It is so evident, not only in the Word of God, but as well, from a common-sense standpoint. Man seems to naturally understand such, but tries to avoid it at the same time. For example, when God faced **Cain** with his bad choice of a sacrifice (not bringing what God had commanded)—He was rebuked by God and advised to deal with sin in his life or it will rule over him (Gen. 3:1-8). Cain again acted as an irresponsible person and became angry over God's rejection of his sacrifice—feeling possibly that God was unjust! He didn't make the choice to face up to his wrong choice; and neither did he face up to the need of dealing with sin. He wound up killing his brother out of anger also.

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS ON CHOICE

Deut. 30:19-20—God showed Israel the way to "**life**" or "**death**" and then called upon them to choose "**life**." He then tells them how they choose "**Life**:" (1) by loving the Lord your God; (2) by obeying His voice; and (3) by holding fast to Him!

Joshua 24:15-18—A short time after Israel had gone in and conquered and settled the land of Canaan, God (through Joshua) calls upon His people again to make the right choice: **choose to serve the Lord!** Turn away from the idol gods about them and serve the Lord only!

Gen. 25:31-34--Esau, the son of Jacob, is another Old Testament example of one who did not want to face up to his bad choice. He sold his birthright to Jacob for a "mess of bread and lentil stew" (ASV). Esau despised his birthright. Then, later, when it came time for the blessing, he didn't receive the blessing of the first born because he had sold his birthright. The consequences of his bad choice came back to haunt him (Gen. 27:38-41).

1 Kings 18:21—Northern Israel was faced with a very critical decision also by the Prophet Elijah! The king of the Northern Kingdom was leading the people into idolatry (the worship of Baal). Elijah asked them how long will you go without making a "clear-cut" decision whom you really want to serve—God or Baal! You remember the outcome of the contest between Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal.

Matt. 11:28-30—Jesus challenged the Israelite people to make a choice of whether to come to Him or not. It was their choice, but every choice has its consequences. As Jesus pointed out clearly in Luke 6:46—"*Repent or perish!*"

Matt. 12:36-37—A coming Judgment Day (2 Cor. 5:10) makes it very clear that man not only has a choice, but there will be consequences of his choices. Man will give an accounting unto His Maker—and he knows it deep inside! (Matt. 10:11-15; 12:41-42; 23:31-35; 25:14-30; etc.).

CONSEQUENCES OF GOOD OR BAD CHOICES

Matt. 12:37—Be justified or condemned by our choice of words!

Acts 5:1-5—Both Ananias and his wife made a decision to lie to God and suffered the consequences!

Acts 7:51-60—Stephen chose to tell the truth to the Jewish council and suffered martyred as a result!

Acts 8:1-4—The early Christians chose to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and were scattered abroad by persecution.

Acts 20:28-30—Men will choose to teach perverse things and draw away disciples after them—unto destruction! (2 Peter 2:1).

2 Tim. 3:12—Those who make a choice to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution! It is the natural outcome of that way of living for persecution to be brought upon righteous people.

The Scriptures record many choices (both good and bad) and the outcome of these choices so that we can be warned or exhorted to make the right choices for our lives. Some of the Old Testament examples are purposefully given to this end, such as:

1. **2 Peter 2:4**—Even the Angels who chose to rebel against God are used as an example of the consequences of the wrong choice.
2. **2 Peter 2:5**—The wicked world in Noah's day! (Gen. 6:1-8). While all the world had made the wrong choice about serving God, there was one man that stood out among them who did make the right choice—Noah! The world was destroyed by a flood, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
3. **2 Peter 2:6**—The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah made the choice to live ungodly (Gen. 18:20-21; 19:1-7, 24-25) and suffered the terrible consequences of destruction.
4. **1 Cor. 10:1-12**—During the wilderness wanderings, many of the people of Israel were lured into choosing to commit fornication and worship idols and 23,000 died at the hand of God in one day.

While the Bible records many of the bad choices and the consequences that came because of such; it also records a lot of good examples of good choices for us to imitate. The whole eleventh chapter of Hebrews in particular is dedicated to the great men and women of faith who made the right choice that pleased God, and were blessed as a result. However, they may have also suffered martyrdom or some terrible persecution as a result of their choice.....and they probably knew that such would come, but made their choice anyway because it was RIGHT!

Man was created by God as a creature of choice—and we know it! But it is one thing to know and another to accept the responsibility that goes with the power of choice. Every day we live we are called upon to make choices. We not only need to learn how to make good choices, but be willing to accept the responsibility that goes with the choices we make.

If you have made a choice to become a Christian and live a righteous life, there will be consequences that come from that choice. We need to make the right choices and be ready for the consequences that may come that are not desirable. But at the same time hold tight in faith to the good consequences of the right decisions that we make. We need to choose "life" and not "death" so we can live with God for all eternity! (Matthew 25:46).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did Adam and Eve know that they were creatures of choice? (Gen. 2:15-17)
2. Why do people tried to avoid being responsible for their choices?
3. Why was Cain angry with God? (Gen. 3:1-8)
4. What choice did God give to Israel as He tried to prepare them to go into the land of Canaan and possess it? (Deut. 30:19-20)
5. What choice did Esau make that he regretted later? (Gen. 25:31-34)
6. What choice did Elijah call upon Northern Israel to make? (1 Kgs. 18:21)
7. How does a coming "Judgment Day" tell man that he is a being of choice and is responsible for his choices? (Heb. 9:27)
8. What choice did Ananias & Sapphira make that cost them their lives? (Acts 5:1-5)
9. What choice did Stephen make that cost him his life? (Acts 7:51-60).
10. If we choose to live godly, what can we expect as a consequence of that choice? (2 Tim. 3:12)

Lesson Two

"Obedience versus Disobedience"

Speech is one of several ways that we communicate with one another. Words have basic meanings connected to them which help to get our ideas into the mind of others. But over a period of time, words can change their meaning—or should we say that the people who use them incorrectly help to bring about a change of meaning in their use. Sometimes, even the "younger generation" will give new meaning to a word that will catch on in our society. For example, the word "gay" has taken on an entirely different meaning from its original use.

Even if words do not change in their meaning, they can take on a "connotation" of something good or bad. The religious communities about us—in their use of certain words—have caused certain words to take on a bad connotation. The following words, as they are used, have a bad connotation spiritually: **"Obedience," "Works,"** and **"Law."** The same might be said of **"Duty," "Obligation,"** and a **"Sense of Ought."** These are not the kind of words people like to hear or to have pressed upon them to accept or abide by. *"All six terms 'SMACK' of trying to 'EARN' one's salvation"*—is the way many would express it. But we firmly believe that all six words or expressions are good, proper, and communicate correctly to human beings their responsibility before God. Mankind has always been under obligation to keep God's Law, to do the Works of righteousness, to do their Duty, to recognize their need to be Obedient in order to be acceptable with God. God has the right to command His creatures to live and act a certain way and He also has the right to expect such from us.

PASSAGES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gen. 22:18—*"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

Gen. 26:5—*"Because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws."*

Exo. 19:5—*"Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples..."*

1 Sam. 15:22—*"Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."*

PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matt. 7:21—"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

Acts 2:38—"...Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."

Acts 5:29—"...We ought to obey God rather than men."

Rom. 6:16-18—"...to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

2 Thess. 1:8—"in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

These and many other passages, both in the Old and New Testaments, can be given that emphasize man's need to be obedient unto God. To ignore these passages is to be willing to be blinded to a proper understanding of God's Word!

WHAT IS OBEDIENCE?

"Obedience" in the Bible signifies active response to something one hears, rather than passive listening! To say that a person "hears" God's Word is the same as saying he is obedient to the command of God. To disobey God is to turn a "deaf ear" to what God is saying. In other words—"**to hear is to hearken to the Word of God!**" To hear the Word of God involves the obligation to comply or obey. The concept of obedience is intimately linked in Scripture with "hearing" and "believing." (Gen. 15:6; 22:18; Rom. 4:3; James 2:21-24).

- 1. Obedience involves respect for Authority!** God definitely has the right and the power to command and back it up with reward or punishment. Jesus is portrayed to us as Lord and as King—both terms signifies Authority!
- 2. Obedience is doing what is right!** It is right because God says so. It is wrong to disobey God's Will. This is what makes us sinners and in need of the grace of God because we never do right at all times. This disobedience is referred to as: "**Sin,**" "**Transgression,**" and "**Iniquities.**" (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Sin is literally defined as a "missing of the mark!" **Sin** is to go against God and His Law. If there was no law for us to go by, then there would be no sin. and the whole concept of religion is a worthless pursuit. Where there is Law, there will be either **JUSTIFICATION** (Perfect Law keeping) or **SINNERS** (those who break Law) who are in need of the grace of God.

- 3. Obedience is living up to our conscience!** From Adam down to the time of Christ, the Gentile world only had an "oral" Law from God and no inspired written Law that we know of. Paul called it the "*Law written in their hearts.*" (Rom. 2:14-15). They were expected to live up to this "Law." When they didn't, they had a sense of guilt and needed forgiveness from God in order to be acceptable to Him. The Sacrificial System, that both the Gentiles and the Jews had, was God's way of helping both to deal with their guilt.

Obedience is to "die" to the way of sin (Rom. 5:18-6:2, 6, 7, 11-13, 16-18). Obedience and righteousness are tied closely together. And disobedience and wickedness or sin are tied closely together. But Jesus pointed out that also that obedience and friendship with Him are tied closely together (John 15:14)

JESUS, THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF OBEDIENCE!

He said that He came into the world to "do" the Will of the Father (Heb. 10:5-7; Jn. 4:34; 8:29). The Apostle said that Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8). The Hebrew writer stated that Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered (Heb. 5:8). His was a perfect obedience that made Him the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus showed His love for His Father by keeping His commands completely. We show our love for the Father and the Son by our obedience as well (Jn. 14:31; 15:10).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. The righteous person is the one who does right (obeys). (1 Jn. 3:7).
2. We are either children of God or children of the devil. (1 Jn. 3:10)---- which depends upon whom we obey (follow).
3. We will be judged by whether we keep God's commands (Jn. 12:48; 2 Cor. 5:8-10; Rev. 20:12).
4. Our relationship to God depends upon our obedience (Jn. 14:23; 15:10).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What makes "speech" a means of communication?
2. What causes words to have a "connotation" of good or bad?
3. Should the words: Obedience, Duty, Works, Law, Obligation, and a Sense of Ought be considered as "bad?"
4. What does the Old Testament say about Obedience?
5. What does the New Testament say about Obedience?
6. What are three significant things about Obedience?
7. How did Jesus show His love and respect for His Father?
8. Can a person be considered as righteous who is continually disobeying God?
9. Why does our relationship to God depend upon our obedience?
10. Upon what will God base His judgment of us in the Judgment Day?

Lesson Three**"Justification by Works of Law"**

Man is not only a created being, but a responsible being that has the power of choice. This choice is a question of whether we will be obedient to God or disobedient to God and go our own way. If that was all there was to this issue, there would be no problem for man. But the choices we make have consequences that we have to face—and some of them are not very pleasant, even in this life! But the Word of God says that there are also "eternal" consequences of our choices that should cause us to sit up and take notice! If we believe this, then we obviously will want to avoid any undesirable outcomes to us or to our loved ones.

THE STATED PURPOSES OF GOD'S LAW

The Apostle Paul stated that God is not the author of confusion, but peace, and that He expects His creatures to also be orderly people (act according to His Law)! (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). All men, from the beginning of time, have been under Law to God in one form or another. We know this because the Bible clearly states that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). If all have sinned, then there had to be a Law that they were responsible for—for where there is no law there is no transgression (Rom. 4:15). Why did God give us Law in the first place:

1. **To show man how he ought to live—strict adherence to God's Law (Deut. 4:2, etc.)**
2. **To show man what is right (Rom. 7:7).**
3. **To know the consequences of disobedience to God (Rom. 6:23).**
4. **To pronounce righteous those who keep God's Law (Rom. 2:13).**

According to the last point above (#4), the Law of God is designed to pronounce that a person who keeps God's Law is just before God by his keeping the Law (perfectly, understood).

TWO WAYS OF BEING JUSTIFIED

According to the Scriptures, there are two ways that man can be just in God's sight: (1) By perfect Law-keeping; or (2) By grace through faith. In this lesson we want to see what is involved in the first way of justification that is listed—**"Perfect Law keeping!"** Is it really possible for man to keep God's Law perfectly and not break one Law? Is it possible for a human being to obey God

in every detail and never go against His Law? *"Theoretically,"* it may be possible, but from a reality standpoint, there has only been one perfect man—Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God who became flesh—being tempted in all points like us, but without sin (Heb. 4:15). To our knowledge, there has not been another perfect person. But....what if man could keep God's Law, what would be understood?

Rom. 2:13—He is just before God!

1 Pet. 2:21-24—He is sinless like Jesus!

Titus 3:5—He does not need the mercy of God!

Rom. 11:6—He has earned or merited his way to Heaven!

Rom. 4:4—Eternal Life is owed to him as a Debt!

Eph. 2:8-9—He can boast in his accomplishments!

Rom. 4:14—The necessity of faith is made void!

Gal. 2:21—The Death of Jesus on the Cross was in vain for that person!

It should be obvious that the perfect person has no need of God's mercy—he is perfect, without fault! He is not lost, so he does not need to be saved! Salvation and forgiveness is for sinners, not for perfect people!

THE INHERIT WEAKNESS OF LAW

Have you ever heard someone make this comment: *"That person is so good that God ought to save them!"* That may sound good, but it is contradictory! If a person is "good enough," he does not need to be saved—for he is not lost! To admit the need to be saved is to admit that I am sinful. On the one hand, it is to see a person's need for the grace of God; and then, turns around and thinks that the person is so good that he deserves heaven!

The writer(s) of both the Roman Letter and the Hebrew Letter mention the "weakness" or "fault" of the Law. (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 8:7-8). It is very simple—**It cannot save anyone, but only condemns the law-breaker!** The Law, which is perfect, has no place for man's weakness or sinfulness in regards to being just before God (Rom. 7:12). Isaiah stated man's condition clearly—our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). It must be clearly understood that man is either a perfect law-keeper or a sinner in need of God's grace! (Rom. 7:24-25). Our "goodness" is worthless, unless it is perfect "goodness!" Since we are sinful people, we are under the sentence of eternal death for our law-breaking. We need deliverance from such a curse! We can strive to keep the Law of God as good as we can; but unfortunately, we cannot keep it perfectly and are therefore under the curse of death. There is no deliverance in "Law-keeping!" Why? Because it requires perfection!

THE TRUE OUTCOME OF BEING UNDER A LAW-SYSTEM

If a man desires to be just before God by keeping the Law, he must realize that he must *"continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."* (Gal. 3:10). In James' letter, he states the thought clearly: *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."* (James 2:10). If a person can keep the whole law (perfectly).....then, he is not a sinner, not lost, and has been able to stand just before the God of Heaven. But if he breaks it in just one place, he stands condemned before God as a law-breaker. He needs then to honestly admit to himself and to God—**"I am a Sinner!"** (Rom. 3:19, 23). It should be clearly evident then that no one can be justified by "Law keeping!" (Rom. 3:20). If a man cannot be looked upon as just before God under a "Law System," then he only has one other alternative—look to God for help!

THE PURPOSES OF GRACE

Why does man need the grace of God? What are its purposes? The following Scriptures can give insight to help answer the above questions:

1. **To deliver sinful man from the CURSE of breaking God's Law (Gal. 3:13).**
2. **To make me dead to a Law-System of justification (Gal. 2:19).**
3. **To show me that my justification is God produced, not merited on my part (Titus 3:5).**
4. **To show me that my boasting needs to be in Jesus, and not in myself (1 Cor. 1:31).**
5. **To impute righteousness to a sinful person (Rom. 4:11).**
6. **To give us hope since we cannot justify ourselves before God (Rom. 8:24).**
7. **To provide forgiveness, peace, fellowship with God, and eternal life (Rom. 6:17-18; 5:1, 10; 6:23).**

God wants all men to be saved.....but it is only possible by His grace (2 Pet. 3:9). Grace is God's part in our justification. He does not force us to be saved....we must accept His grace in His appointed way. This will be discussed in the next lesson. If we can fully grasp how dependant we are upon the grace of God, we will sing His praises gladly as the Apostle did: *"to the praise of the glory of His grace, He made us accepted in the beloved."* (Eph. 1:6).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is so important about man being able to make choices?
2. How do we know that man has always been under obligation to keep God's Law from the very beginning?
3. What are some purposes of Law?
4. What are the two ways to be justified before God?
5. What is the true outcome of a person being under a Law-System?
6. What could be understood....if man could keep God's Law perfectly?
7. What is the inherent weakness of Law?
8. What are some purposes of God's grace?

Lesson Four**"Justification by Grace Through Faith"**

The Law of God does its job well—it lets us know in no uncertain terms that we are sinners (Rom. 3:23). It even emphasizes that there is *"None righteous—no, not one!"* (Rom. 3:10). And if you have any doubts about this being factual, just look and see how man fails to keep his own man-made laws!

Two systems are discussed in Scripture by which man can be looked upon as justified before God: (1) A Law System; and (2) A Grace System! These two concepts are like Oil and Water—they don't mix! They are two separate and distinct systems of justification! It is showing that man can only approach God on one of two basis: (1) On the basis of his own merit (works or deeds); or, (2) On the basis of the merit of another (Jesus Christ)! The two systems are referred to as:

- (1) The way of Law and Works (Meritorious works).
- (2) The way of Grace and Faith (Unmeritorious works).

It is very important to understand that we are not justified by (Meritorious) Works of Law, but that we are justified by God's Grace through an obedient faith (unmeritorious works). Both the Apostle Paul and James (in their letters) illustrate the above by reference to Abraham's justification.

Romans 4:1-5. Paul states that Abraham was justified by his faith and not by works of Law. To state it more clearly—Abraham was not just before God on the basis of "perfect" Law keeping; but he was justified by his faith. The Apostle does not discuss what "kind" of faith is being talked about.

James 2:21. James states that Abraham was justified by works and quotes the same passage that Paul quotes. James is not saying that Abraham was justified because he kept God's Law perfectly; but rather, that his justification was by Grace through Faith.....but an obedient faith that did what God told him to do. He even adds that Abraham's faith was perfected or made complete by his obedience (works).

If man could be justified on the basis of Law keeping, he could boast of what he has accomplished (Rom. 4:2; Eph. 2:8-9); but that boasting goes out the window when we truly see ourselves as sinners in need of the mercy and forgiveness of God. Our boasting is to be of what God has done for us—not what we have done for God!

JESUS ILLUSTRATES GRACE

Jesus told the story of two men who went into the Temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee (a strict sect of the Jewish Religion). The other man was a Publican (a tax collector) that was looked down upon by the Jewish people as a traitor to the Jewish people. The Pharisee did not go in humbly, but arrogantly thanking God that he was not like other men—especially like the tax collector. He also reminded God of all the "good" things he had done....as though God owed justification to him. However, the Publican would not even raise his eyes toward heaven and cried out for mercy to God. Jesus indicated that it was the Publican that went to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. Why? Luke 18:9, 14 indicates two thoughts:

- 1. Because there are those who trust in themselves that they are righteous.**
- 2. Because those who humble themselves will be exalted, but those who exalt themselves will be humbled.**

It is important to see that our "goodness" is worthless unless it is perfect goodness! Otherwise, we must depend upon the mercy of God to save us. This passage shows us clearly that "good, sincere, 'righteous' people" can be lost. Why? Because they are depending upon their own goodness to get them to heaven, rather than the Grace of God. (See Matthew 7:21-23). Cain and Abel illustrate this concept way back in the very beginning of things. They both brought a sacrifice to God. Abel brought a blood sacrifice—recognizing his need of God's mercy. Cain felt that God should accept whatever he brought—showing his lack of faith, but also his arrogance. Cain's disobedience invalidated his relationship to God. Abel was accepted before God on the basis of his obedient faith. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is given to help us clearly see that we are saved by the Grace of God, but through an obedient faith on our part.

MAN'S WORKS OF FAITH

Salvation by Grace is "universally" offered to mankind through the preaching of the Gospel. However, not all will accept God's offer since He has placed some conditions that man must meet in order to receive the Grace of God. These conditions do not in any way earn or merit our justification—but the conditions must be met if one is to be justified by the Grace of God. When the Apostle Peter stood before the thousands of Jews on the Day of Pentecost (recorded in Acts 2) and preached the Gospel for the first time. He was able to convince 3,000 that they were lost and needed God's grace. When they ask what they must do, they were told to "***Repent and be baptized for the Remission of sins.***" Their faith needed to be put into action!

Jewish people that Jesus was the promised Redeemer. When they cried out: "*What shall we do?*".....They were not told "You can do nothing!"

Rather, they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). And they gladly received his word and were baptized into Christ. When one stops and thinks about what they were told to do—it is obvious that believing in Jesus, repenting, and being baptized does not merit Salvation! Neither do they make God owe us something! When believing, penitent people meet the conditions that God requires, then God carries out His promise of forgiveness. How do we know that God has done this? We believe God! We trust that He will do what He promises!

But obedience to the Gospel message is just the beginning of the Christian walk. In order to continue receiving the forgiveness of sins (or remain in the Grace of God) it is important that we continue to turn from sin (Rom. 6:1-2) and continue to walk in the light (continued obedience) (1 John 1:7). We will need the grace of God (forgiveness) all of our lives—even as a Christian! Eternal life comes to those who not only obey the Gospel (1 Peter 1:22), but continue in that obedience to the will of God—even unto our death (Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 2:10).

It is also important to realize three things that "works of faith" give recognition to:

1. **That we are all sinners, law-breakers, and need God's mercy (Rom. 3:23).** Our hope is not in self, but in Christ Jesus. He is our Redeemer, our Savior! (Matt. 1:21).
2. **Our justification is God produced—unmerited on our part (Rom. 6:23).** The only debt that we are owed is "death!" That is the wages of sin—what sin deserves!
3. **Our boasting or glorying is not in ourselves, but in God and His Son (Eph. 2:8-9).** God deserves the glory, the praise, and the honor for redeeming us through His Son.

FALLING FROM GRACE

It is important that we realize the danger of falling from Grace! We are given the privilege of choosing to receive Grace and we can also choose to reject Grace. The Apostle warns of this danger in Gal. 5:4. False teachers were causing the Galatian Christians to turn from Grace to a Works System of justification. What they were advocating made God's Grace invalid. They were turning their backs on the very One that could provide the Grace of God—Jesus! We cannot justify ourselves by suffering, dying, and being raised back to life! Only God can produce justification. Grace helps to keep our obedience in proper perspective!

Lesson Five

"Terms that Identify Our Relationship to God"

One of the helpful things about Scripture is its efforts to say something important by repeating the thought several times or by using various other terms that illustrate the concept from a different perspective. When it comes to the all-important idea of redemption, such an approach becomes very obvious. It is the purpose of this lesson to look at the various terms used that are all related to our right standing before God.

Atonement. This is mostly an Old Testament word. It is only used once in the New Testament in the King James Version (Romans 5:11). In other versions it is "***Reconciliation.***" "***Day of Atonement***" is a well-known phrase from the Old Testament. We don't receive the atonement, but we do receive the benefit of the atonement made by Jesus when we obey the gospel. The idea of atonement is that of a substitute for another—the innocent paying the penalty for the guilty—like the animal sacrifices under the Old Testament system. Jesus became a substitute for sinful man in His death on the cross. A sacrifice has been made that is sufficient to atone for man's sins (Romans 5:6-11).

Propitiation. This carries with it the idea of turning away of wrath by an offering. Man's rebellion against God incurs both guilt and God's wrath (Romans 1:18). The guilt is removed and the wrath taken away by the Sacrifice of Christ (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Jesus is mankind's means of averting the wrath of God for sin.

Reconciliation. The idea here is a restoration of friendship that has been broken by wrong actions. It infers that there is an estrangement between two parties, but that estrangement has been removed and the two are back together again in fellowship or friendship (Matthew 5:24; 1 Corinthians 7:11). Jesus has been the means of removing the barrier (sinful rebellion against God) that separates God and man and brings them back into fellowship (2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20-22). Jesus is the great reconciler (Isaiah 53:5).

Justification. In a legal sense, it is to be tried before a court of Law and pronounced either guilty or innocent. If guilty, the just penalty of the Law will be administered. If innocent, a person will be pronounced as "not guilty," "just," or "righteous." We don't have to suffer the just penalty of our sins because Jesus met the demands of the Law for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus, we can be

pronounced “just” when in reality we were guilty—because our sins have been taken away (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:1-2).

Righteous. A righteous person is one who does right (1 John 3:7). But all have sinned (Romans 3:23); therefore there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). But the sacrifice of Jesus is able to make us “right” in the sight of God (Romans 3:24-26).

Redemption. Physical bondage has been a part of the human heritage. It has had man’s most intense hatred and resentment. It is one of man’s strongest desires—to be free! But man is faced with a greater bondage—bondage to sin (Romans 6:16)! The terrible problem is—we can’t free ourselves—only God can do this! And thankfully, God has done this through Jesus (Galatians 3:13; 4:3-5). Jesus bought us and set us free (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He paid the supreme price (Hebrews 9:12; 1 Peter 1:18; Revelations 5:9-10).

Freedom. The outcome of Redemption is freedom. But freedom is of little value if we turn around and go back into bondage (Galatians 5:1). We have been made free and are exhorted not to go back into it (Romans 6:1-2). We have given up a bad master for a greater, more loving master (Matthew 24).

Regeneration. This word occurs twice in the New Testament in the King James Version (Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5). The Greek word carries with it the idea of being born again or having a new beginning. Synonyms that are often used of this word are: Renewal, Revival, Renovate, or Restoration. We are all aware of the idea of degeneration—we all experience it if we live long enough! Spiritually, man is in a condition of degeneration that has him in the hold of death. He needs to be made alive, but he cannot do it himself. Jesus came that we might have life (John 10:10; 8:24; Titus 3:5; John 3:5). Regeneration is more than just being cleansed of sin, it is a new beginning, a new creation, to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-4)—a transformation has taken place within the heart (Romans 6:16-18). The idea of being born again (John 3:3-5) is to have the opportunity to start afresh to live right before God.

Salvation. The Greek word means: “To make sound, heal, save, preserve....to save from death or keep one alive physically.” Men in places of authority or power who could help people were called “saviors.” The word is used with reference to deliverance of a person from material or temporal dangers, sufferings, sickness (Matthew 8:25; James 5:15; 2 Tim. 4:18). Also, it is used with reference to deliverance from spiritual or eternal consequences of sin (Romans 5:9; Mark 16:16; Matthew 18:11). The word infers some kind of danger that a person needs to be saved or delivered from. It infers that

spiritually he needs a savior who can deliver him from the just penalty of his sins.

Sanctification. The Greek word is also translated: Holiness, Hallow, Holy, Holiest, Holy One, Holy Place, Holy Thing, Sanctuary, and Saint. When applied to man, it involves the concept of cleansing him from sin and setting him apart unto God (Consecrating him unto God). It is to be separated from the world and coming into a saved relationship with God. When man is sanctified, he is called “holy” or a “saint” of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 6:1-2). But sanctification is a continual cleansing and setting apart process throughout one’s life as a Christian (1 John 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). This sanctification is accomplished by hearing the Word of God and responded properly to it (John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

Conversion. This word occurs over 50 times in the New Testament. It is translated in the following ways: “convert, conversion, to be converted, to turn, to turn again, to turn about, to turn back, or to return.” The word can be used of someone that brings about the conversion of another person or a person converting himself. There is a strong emphasis upon man turning himself. God commands man to be converted (Acts 3:19). God has provided the means of forgiveness, the way of conversion, and the motivation to man to be converted. Man is expected to act upon these things and convert himself (turn himself) to God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The reason given for turning to God is---“*so that your sins may be blotted out.*” (Acts 3:19). Conversion involves both the heart and the conduct of man. Man’s heart loves sin and needs to be turned to love God, righteousness, and holiness (Jeremiah 17:9). The change of a man’s heart then leads him to a changed life (Romans 6:1-2, 16-18). But conversion also involves a change of one’s state or relationship. In this conversion process he comes into a state of being right with God—having a right relationship with God. He has left the lost state and is now in a saved state.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Other words could be looked at that are identified with the above, but these should be sufficient to illustrate how clearly God is trying to make His message of salvation to man. It would be hard to miss the point! Let’s be appreciative, not only of the Salvation that we enjoy in Christ, but for His Word that makes it so plain and important.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who is our atonement today?
2. What is removed and taken away in Propitiation?
3. Why is there a need for reconciliation between God and man?
4. What determines if a man is just or not?
5. How are we made righteous before God?
6. What was the price paid for our redemption?
7. What is the meaning of regeneration?
8. Can a person be saved who is lost?
9. What is involved in the process of sanctification?
10. What is involved in Conversion?

Lesson Six

"Continued Justification"

There is no doubt in my mind that all of us would like to believe that once we have been saved, redeemed, justified, etc., that we cannot be lost or become unsaved! Do the Scriptures teach this? Just how secure is our justification before God? Can we rightfully believe that we have eternal life now and therefore it cannot be lost? Or, can a Christian so sin that he can lose his relationship with God? Can a sincere, dedicated, honest believer ever lose his justification before God?

IS THERE NEED OF CONTINUED FORGIVENESS?

Unless a person believes that a Christian never sins, it would seem very logical that he would continually need the forgiveness of God in order to maintain his relationship with God. From several Scriptures we know that the Christian sins (1 John 1:10-2:1; Jude 4; Gal. 1:6, etc.). Then, we need to ask: *"What are the conditions mentioned in the Scriptures that makes it possible for the Christian to be forgiven?"* The Apostle John said: *"If we walk in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."* (1 Jn. 1:7). John then adds: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9).

The above thoughts should make something very obvious—that our justification originally and our continued justification before God is not on the basis of perfect "Law-Keeping!" Our being looked upon as just from beginning to end is by Grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:1-2, etc.). A person is saved or justified by God's grace when his faith is expressed in obedience to the gospel (Rom. 6:1-4, 15-18; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16). The Christian's continued justification is on the basis of God's grace through an obedient faith (1 Jn. 1:7; Heb. 5:8-9; Titus 2:11-12).

If continued Justification is maintained by our faith; then, it is critical that we keep our faith strong! A strong faith is first and foremost an obedient faith (James 2:17-26). The following passages indicate the kind of faith that keeps us justified before God:

1. **Phil. 2:12**—By working out our salvation with fear and trembling.
2. **Heb. 5:8-9**—By obeying as Jesus obeyed.
3. **2 Jn. 9**—By continuing in the doctrine of Christ.

4. **1 Jn. 1:7**—By continually walking in the light.
5. **1 Jn. 1:9**—By continually confessing our sins.
6. **Rev. 2:10**—By being faithful unto death.
7. **Rev. 22:14**—By keeping God's commandments.
8. **Gal. 5:7**—By continuing in the Truth of God.
9. **1 Pet. 5:12**—By continuing to stand in the true grace of God.

HOW SECURE IS THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS JUSTIFIED CONDITION?

From the above passages it should be obvious that our continued justification before God is as secure as we choose to make it on our part. We can choose to continue faithful to God all the days of our life or we can choose to turn from God. The Hebrew writer deals with this issue in a very clear way when he writes: *"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily....lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."* (Hebrews 3:7-19). He also adds: *"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it."* (Heb. 4:1).

While there are many passages that indicate to us how to make our justification secure, there are also other passages that give us assurance from God's standpoint. Jesus said: *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."* (Jn. 10:27-29). Jesus is trying to build our faith in the power of God to save! No one is more powerful than He is. We can depend upon His promises to be carried out...but, we must do our part. We have the choice to come to Jesus and we can also make the choice to stay faithful to Him or to leave Him! It is our choice—no one else can make that choice for us or force us to deny Him! Peter re-emphasizes this concept in these words: *"to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."* (1 Pet. 1:4-5). God's power can keep us justified if we can keep our faith in God strong! Paul reassures us of God's promises in Rom. 8:37-39 with these brief words: *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us...."* If you will noticed in each of the above passages that there is a double emphasis—God's part and man's part! Yes, man has a part to play in his continued justification before God. The Christian has a choice of whether to have the kind of faith that will justify him or have a dead faith or no faith! Our part is vital to maintaining that justified state before God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAN'S FAITH

If our faith in God is necessary in order to become justified in the sight of God and this faith is a matter of our choice—whether we will believe or not; then, does a justified person lose the power of choice when he becomes a Christian? The answer should be obvious! Then, can a Christian make the choice to disbelieve? Look at the passages below that indicate this possibility:

1. **Heb. 3:12**—To come to have an evil heart of unbelief and depart from God.
2. **Heb. 3:19**—Israel could not enter the promise land because of unbelief.
3. **Heb. 6:4-6**—Warning against falling away.
4. **Heb. 12:15**—Danger of falling short of the grace of God.
5. **Rev. 3:5; 20:15**—If not overcomers, names blotted out of the book of life.
6. **1 Cor. 10:12**—If you think you stand, take heed lest you fall. (From what?).
7. **1 Tim. 4:1**—Some **shall** depart from the **faith!**
8. **2 Pet. 2:20-22**—Again entangled in the world and overcome.
9. **2 Pet. 1:10**—If you do these things, you won't stumble or fall.

The key to losing our justified standing before God is unbelief which is exemplified in disobedience to God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The true follower of Jesus wants to live right each day. Because of this desire, he very easily can recognize when he does wrong. Thus, there is a continual need for him to recognize and confess that sinfulness before God (1 Jn. 1:9). While he has made the decision to die to the way of sin (Rom. 6:1-2), he is not perfect, but finds himself sinning out of ignorance, weakness, or discouragement, etc. God requires His people to be faithful and obedient in order to remain justified in His sight. He promises daily cleansing by the blood of Jesus. However--unbelief, or continued walking in the way of sin, or a seared conscience, or turning from God's truth, or exalting ourselves above Christ, or allowing ourselves to be deceived, or becoming ensnared and enslaved to sin again, or turning to false teaching—can all lead to the sin that is unto death (1 Jn. 5:16-17; Heb. 3:12-14). Faith is a lifetime outlook. To disbelieve is to lose the prize. ***"This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith!"*** (1 Jn. 5:4). We need to be: ***"rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith..."*** (Col. 2:7). We need to pray that our faith can increase (2 Cor. 10:15) so that we can be rich in faith—as well as sound in the faith (Jas. 2:5; Tit. 2:2).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What indicates that the Christian needs continued forgiveness?
2. Upon what basis is our original justification and our continued justification—Law-Keeping or Grace through Faith?
3. When does our faith justify us?
4. Is continued justification also secured by grace through faith?
5. What are some passages that show that our faith needs to be active in order to keep us justified before God?
6. Just how secure is our continued justification?
7. What are some passages that show that a Christian can disbelieve?
8. What is said to be the means of our victory over the world?
9. What does it mean to be established in the faith and why is it so important?

