

Justification – the heart of the Gospel

This week's verse: Romans 10:9-17

I. Intro

- A. This week we will continue our focus on Justification. This is the heart of the Gospel and the core of what Christianity is all about.
- B. My blog: <http://www.sarcasmagorical.com>
 - i. I'll post class notes, and sometimes a full written post on what the class was about.
 - ii. Disclaimer – my posts are my opinion, not the church's or anyone else's

II. Background

- A. Historical Context (from Easton's Bible Dictionary)

“This epistle was probably written at Corinth. Phoebe ([Romans 16:1](#)) of Cenchrea conveyed it to Rome, and Gaius of Corinth entertained the apostle at the time of his writing it ([16:23](#); [1 Corinthians 1:14](#)), and Erastus was chamberlain of the city, i.e., of Corinth ([2 Timothy 4:20](#)).

The precise time at which it was written is not mentioned in the epistle, but it was obviously written when the apostle was about to "go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints", i.e., at the close of his second visit to Greece, during the winter preceding his last visit to that city ([Romans 15:25](#); Compare [Acts 19:21](#); [20:2,3,16](#); [1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#)), early in A.D. 58.

It is highly probable that Christianity was planted in Rome by some of those who had been at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:10](#)). At this time the Jews were very numerous in Rome, and their synagogues were probably resorted to by Romans also, who in this way became acquainted with the great facts regarding Jesus as these were reported among the Jews. Thus a church composed of both Jews and Gentiles was formed at Rome. Many of the brethren went out to meet Paul on his approach to Rome. There are evidences that Christians were then in Rome in considerable numbers, and had probably more than one place of meeting ([Romans 16:14,15](#)).”

B. Literary Context

- i. Romans is Paul's clearest and most direct theological treatise on the Gospel.
- ii. Specifically, it illustrates that the Gospel is offered to everyone – Jew or Gentile – and that everyone is in need of the Gospel.
- iii. Chapter 10 comes toward the end of Paul's case for the Gospel. He has shown that justification comes through faith and that we are dead to the Law because of this.
- iv. In Chapter 10, he goes on to say that because we have all been saved by faith and not of any works of our own, we are all on equal footing

with God – particularly that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile.

C. Content

D. Jesus Hermeneutic

- i. The Gospel needs no works of ours to be effective in saving us. We are simply called to trust in what Christ has already done for us.
- ii. The Gospel is a unifying force within the Church, because none of us have any works of our own to compare to others. We are all saved entirely by faith, and not by works of our own.
- iii. This saving faith comes from hearing the Word of God. We must therefore be diligent to send and be sent as ambassadors of Christ, that others may hear this wonderful truth and also come to saving faith.

III. Justification by Faith Alone (verses 9-13)

A. The Law gives us no hope of salvation

- i. Recall our first class (Romans 3:10-26), where we looked at all the condemnations the Law gives us
- ii. “There is none righteous, no not one.”
- iii. “There is none who understands”
- iv. “They are altogether unprofitable”
- v. “No one does good”
- vi. If we trust in our own works, we have no hope

B. The Gospel is revealed apart from the Law

- i. Recall also from our first class, that the Gospel is revealed apart from the Law
- ii. We are saved on the merit of Christ’s works – His life, death and resurrection – and not by any of our own doing

C. We take hold of the Gospel by faith

- i. Titus 3:5 – “It is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy that He saved us.”
- ii. Ephesians 2:8-10 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

iii. It is important to note that faith and confessing are not works

1. Faith is given to us by God

- a. Matt 16:13-17 – “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and

blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

- b. John 1:12-13 – “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
 - c. 2 Tim 1:9-10 – [God] “has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”
2. Confessing and believing Christ is something that saved people do, not something people do to be saved
 3. This is why we confess in church every Sunday
 - a. When we recite the Apostle’s Creed, or the Nicene Creed, in Church we are confessing Christ publicly
 - b. We do this because this verse has told us it is important
 - c. We also do this to show our unity with all of the catholic Church – the church in all times and places
 - d. We should thank God that it is so easy for us to confess our faith. Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ are being imprisoned, tortured or even killed simply for this profession of faith

IV. No distinction of Jew or Gentile (verses 12-13)

V. Faith comes through hearing the Word of God (verses 14-17)

- A. If man’s only hope is to trust in the Good News of Christ, how will he trust a message he hasn’t heard?
 - i. The Great Commission, Matt 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 - ii. Paul is reminding the Church of its call to send out preachers and to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel
- B. Language
 - i. Language is fundamental to all cultures
 - ii. Even when we think, we form our thoughts in language
 - iii. God created by His Word – “Let there be light...”
 - iv. Christ is called the Word of God
- C. Lutheran view of God’s Word
 - i. The finite bears the infinite
 - ii. Augsburg Confession, Article V

- iii. We believe that the Holy Spirit takes the words of the Bible, and specifically the preached Word, and uses them to create faith in our hearts.
 - iv. It is by this work of the Holy Spirit we come to faith, and it is by the continuing work of the Holy Spirit that we are sanctified – not by doing works of the Law, but by the Holy Spirit working in our hearts when we read or hear God’s Word
- D. This is the heart of why Reformation exists – to proclaim the Good News of Christ’s life, death and resurrection
- i. Proclamation and education
 - 1. We proclaim God’s word that our members might better understand their faith and put their trust in Christ alone
 - 2. We equip members of our church to better understand their faith that they might proclaim it to everyone with whom they come in contact
 - ii. Evangelism and Missions
 - 1. We believe it is our calling and privilege to carry the message of Christ’s life, death and resurrection to the people of our community
 - 2. We believe it is our calling and privilege to carry the message of Christ’s life, death and resurrection to people throughout the world, who do not share our culture or language
 - 3. We understand that this is how God spreads His message of redemption, and we rejoice that we can be used as an instrument of His Gospel

VI. Reformation Sunday

- A. Today we’ve looked at two major truths of Christianity that were restored by the Reformation – Sola Fide, and Sola Scriptura
- B. Sola Fide – Faith Alone
 - i. This was one of the major themes of the Reformation
 - ii. We are not justified by any works of our own, but we are saved when we put our faith in Christ’s death and resurrection
 - iii. We do not add to our salvation by doing works, and our salvation is never in danger of being lost due to a lack of works
- C. Sola Scriptura – Scripture Alone
 - i. A case could be made that the entire Reformation was based on this claim
 - 1. The Reformation recovered many of the doctrines of Christianity, but before it could restore any of them, the Word of God needed to hold sole authority
 - 2. If Christianity – its doctrines and practices - was left up to councils of men, then it would always be in danger because men are fallen
 - 3. If Christianity is based solely on God’s revealed Word, then it cannot be changed by sinful people

4. The Reformers would have had no ground to stand against the Pope and the Church unless they had Scripture on which to base their teaching
- ii. The Word of God, scripture, is the only way we learn the truth about God
- iii. Human reason can be a useful tool, but it is always susceptible to sin. For this reason, we trust in confessions, councils, and pastors only in so far as they agree with God's Word