***CTC Prelude Sermon***

**The Importance and Glory of Justification by Faith Alone**

22 July 2018

Bible Passage: Romans 3:21-26

# The Groundwork by Paul *Before* Romans 3:21

# The Good News of Romans 3:21

**3:19-20: “19Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”**

# “But now . . . “ (v. 21)

# *“. . . the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law . . . “ (v. 21)*

# *“. . . although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—. . .” (v. 21)*

# *“—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.” (v. 22)*

# *“. . . For there is no distinction: 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, . . . “ (v. 22-23)*

# *“and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, . . .” (v. 24)*

# *“. . . whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.” (v.25)*

# *“It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (v.26)*

# So What Can We Conclude About Justification From This Passage?

1. Justification pertains to receiving the “righteousness of God” itself (3:21).
2. This righteousness of God is received by faith (3:22)
3. Since we are dealing with the very righteousness of God, it follows that the receiving of such a righteousness *must* not include merit or the like. How could it? It is only something that can be *received*, and hence must be acquired or accessed by faith alone.
4. This access to righteousness is open to Jew and Gentile alike. There is no ethnic or racial or people group distinction in having access to the righteousness of God.
5. We are justified by God’s *grace,* and also *freely* (“as a gift”—ESV).
6. We are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
7. The redemptive act of Christ was a propitiation—a wrath-diverting or absorbing act, an act of judgment. Thus, Christ was judged *in my place*. Since the very second person of the Trinity, the God-Man has taken the judgment due me on himself, and has been judged for all of my sins, there is clearly nothing more I can contribute in terms of merit, earning, etc. I, through faith alone, *receive* the forgiveness and reconciliation and adoption and righteousness provided for me. I am justified by faith alone because God has provided all that is necessary for me to be declared righteous.
8. Justification by faith alone is what flows from recognizing that it is God Himself, in the person of His Son, who has fully dealt with my sin on the cross, and has provided a perfect righteousness for me. Since it is *God’s own righteousness* which is being imputed or reckoned to me, how could I “add” to it in any way? It is a gift, given freely, and hence is received. Received by faith alone.

# Pastoral Implications of Justification by Faith

1. We know that our redemption was accomplished *outside of us* in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our redemption first and foremost happened *outside of us* and *for us.*
2. We know the “end of the story”—our ultimate destiny, because in justification our final verdict of “righteous”, which will be given at the final judgment, has been already given to us in the present. Again, we know the “end of the story.” So, even if we struggle with sin, we know that our ultimate destiny is utter and complete victory over sin, and indeed, utter and complete transformation.
3. While the Christian life is indeed one that should marked by obedience (as will discuss this week), the Christian has been justified *apart from works of the Law*. Indeed, our various acts of obedience in the Christian life ultimately flow from what has happened outside of us—the death and resurrection of Jesus. While we spend time this week thinking about our obedience to the Lord, central to a discussion of *our* obedience is a crucially important truth: *Our* obedience to the Lord flows from, and is a result of, *his* obedience in our place. Through faith we have been brought into union with Christ, and we have been justified—declared righteous. Now being in union with Christ, we are slowly being transformed—as we are in an unbreakable, faith-alone union, with the Son.