

# Justified

by Anton Bosch

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*We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, not by our own efforts or works, but by the work of redemption on the cross.*

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 18:4, Romans 1:17, Romans 3:20, Romans 5:1, Romans 10:10, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:6, 1 Timothy 1:15, Revelation 1:5

**Topics:** "Justification By Faith", "Gods Righteousness"

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## Description

Anton Bosch delves into the heart of the book of Romans, emphasizing the concept of being justified by faith, which sparked the reformation in Martin Luther. He explains the significance of being justified and the connection to righteousness, highlighting that God's righteousness is the standard we must meet. Despite our efforts to be righteous by human standards, only God's righteousness is perfect and necessary for salvation.

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## Transcript

At the heart of the book of Romans is the idea that we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1). Most Christians know that it is this idea that sparked the reformation in the heart of Martin Luther but few seem to understand what it means to be justified and even less seem to appreciate the implications of being justified.

Closely related to "justified" is the term "righteousness". In fact, many translations make no distinction between these two words since they come from the same Greek root. What then does it mean to be "justified" or to be "righteous"? To be righteous is easy to understand. It simply means "being right". So if I am righteous, then I am right. But right in what respect and what is the standard for being right?

The standard is God's righteousness. Romans 1:17 and 3:21 speaks of "the righteousness of God". How right is God? Well He is one hundred percent right. He is right all the time and in everything. God's motives, His thoughts, His deeds, His words and even what God does not do is always right. God never does, or has done, or will do, anything wrong. God is perfectly right and He is perfectly righteous.

Some people may be righteous by their own standards, but that does not mean they are righteous by God's standards. A gang member may be seen by his friends as being righteous because he always does the right thing for and to them. But he is not righteous in the eyes of the law of the state or in the eyes of society in general. A businessman may be regarded as righteous by everyone as he always does the right

thing, pays his taxes, obeys the laws and helps the poor. But he still does not measure up to God's standard of rightness.

When Paul wrote the book of Romans, many Jews felt they could be righteous by keeping the Law of Moses. Paul himself said "touching the righteousness which is in the law, (I was) blameless" (Philippians 3:6). Yet, once he was confronted with God's righteousness he had to declare "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1:15). In Romans 3:10 Paul says: "There is none righteous, no, not one". The problem is that righteousness is not a minor issue. Without it we cannot be saved: "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1Corinthians 6:9). So if none are righteous and if without righteousness we will not inherit the Kingdom, then no one can be saved! And that's exactly the problem.

What does it mean to be justified? You don't have to be a scholar to recognize that to justify has something to do with legal matters since we use the words "justice" and "judge" in the context of legal systems. When someone gives a good excuse or reason for some sin or mistake, we say that they justified themselves. In other words, they made themselves right or righteous. We say that the end justifies the means, meaning that as long as the goal is good, even if we use the wrong method to achieve that goal, the wrong method is made right or justified. (This is of course not true since God requires the right goal achieved by the right means.)

So here's the problem. We need to be righteous to make it into the Kingdom, but we are not so how can we become right? Paul proves clearly that it is impossible to become righteous by keeping the Law of Moses (or any other law, for that matter) "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20).

We can become righteous only if God will justify us. In other words, only if God can and will make us righteous can we become so. There is no other way. But even in this, there is a problem because if God declares me righteous when clearly I am not, then God Himself becomes unrighteous! Neither can God simply forgive my unrighteousness and give me a pardon because if He does that, He breaks His own law which declares that the guilty must die (Ezekiel 18:4).

The only solution was for Jesus to die in my place and to take my sin on Himself. 2Corinthians 5:21 declares that "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him". Since Jesus took my unrighteousness and paid the penalty for my sin, God is able to give me the righteousness of Jesus! That is truly amazing grace that did such a wonderful thing. But that still does not mean that everybody is automatically righteous. There is still one more step. The Judge has to declare me righteous or justified. What decides if He will give me that righteousness or not? Faith! That's the key that connects me to God's gift of righteousness.

Over and over Paul (especially in Romans and Galatians) uses the phrase "justified by faith". But many misunderstand how this works. Some people think that it is faith that justifies them so that faith equals righteousness. No! Faith by itself cannot do anything. It is God who has to do it all. In a sense we are not justified by faith, but rather, we are justified by the work of redemption on the cross. But it is faith that flips the switch that sets all the wonderful work of God in motion. God justifies me because of what Jesus did, not because of what I do. But without believing, righteousness and justification is not accounted or reckoned to my account. It is just as if someone opened an account in my name and deposited a million dollars into that account. But if I never go to the ATM to draw the money, I will remain broke. It is all there

and it is all available, but I actually need to accept and receive what was given to me.

Millions of people will spend a horrible eternity in hell just because they refused to accept, by faith, what cost Jesus so much. We can be made right and declared justified. God has done it all and makes it available to those who will simply believe. "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'" (Romans 10:10).

Oh the wonderful grace and mercy of God that a sinner such as I can actually become justified and be made righteous. "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood ... to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6).

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