

Justified by Faith Alone; Romans 4:1 – 5:1

April 15, 2007; Luan Nguyen

I. Introduction

Definition: *An indulgence is something a person could buy for himself or on behalf of another to lessen or eliminate the punishment for the sins that he has committed even though it had been forgiven.*

Outline of Sermon

- I. What it means to be justified.
- II. Abraham was justified because of his faith alone (vs. 3,9,13.)
Proof:
 - a. Abraham had no reason to boast because it was a gift (vs. 2,4-5).
 - b. The sign of circumcision came after Abraham was justified, not before (vs.10-11).
- III. What role does work (obedience) play in the life of a believer?

II. What does it mean to be justified?

Millard Erickson defines justification this way: *"Justification is God's action pronouncing sinners righteous in his sight. It is a matter of our being forgiven and declared to have fulfilled all that God's law requires of us"* (Christian Theology; Grand Rapids; Baker, 1983; p.954).

1. God forgives us of our sins.

2. God declares that we have fulfilled all that he required of us.

How could God do this? Through imputed righteousness.

Romans 5:19 (NIV) – *"...Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."*

III. Abraham was justified because of his faith.

Romans 4:3 (ESV)

"For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Galatians 3:8-9 (ESV)

*"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." [9] So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."*

Justification came before circumcision.

- 1) Abraham believed
- 2) Abraham was credited to be righteous
- 3) Abraham did what the law of God required of him – got circumcised.

Galatians 2:21, “...if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (NIV).

IV. What role does work play in the life of the believer?

2 Corinthians 9:13 (NIV)

“Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ...”

Psalm 16:11 (ESV)

*You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

We do not pursue a life of holiness because we want to be justified. We pursue a life of holiness because we are justified.

Application

- 1. Past Reality – Move on from past sins.***

2. Present Reality - Fight with certainty, not with uncertainty.

3. Future Reality - Rest assured in the completed work of Jesus Christ.

Personal Application & Care Group Questions

1. Are you resting and trusting in the completed work of Jesus Christ for your salvation? In what ways are you not?
2. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?
3. Why is it so critical to get the order of these two things right?
4. There are those who argue that since we are saved by faith alone how we live our lives do not matter. How does Scripture respond to that?
5. How can the care group pray for you so that you can grow in your trust/rest in the complete work of Jesus Christ for your salvation?