

Redemption in Romans Lesson 4 3Q 2010

Justified by Faith

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, “In this lesson...” thoughts?

Does this description bring you comfort?

What if we add to it the description from lesson 3 on Sabbath, where it describes justification in these words, “God’s declaration of a sinner as righteous in His eyes.” Or from this week’s lesson on Tuesday, “We are justified when we are ‘declared righteous’ by God.”

Any questions about this theory? Are there any problems?

What assumptions are made?

- Justification is a legal problem
- Sin is a legal problem
- Sin and crime are synonymous – thus sin is behavioral
- Justification is the process of changing our records
- Justification happens by declaration
- Sin can be transferred
- Pardon is the goal
- Justification is God doing something to change how God sees us
- Most egregious of all - In God’s government it is “legal” to punish the innocent in place of the guilty
 - How would you like to live in a kingdom in which innocent people could be punished in place of the guilty?
 - What does such a concept do? It makes God’s law arbitrary – there is no relationship to cause and effect, the natural laws of God can be voided. It undermines the entire foundation of God’s universe.

EGW had concerns about how justification was taught:

- The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, **false ideas of justification by faith**. I have been shown for years that **Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain. I have been shown that many have been kept from the faith because of the mixed, confused ideas of salvation, because the ministers have worked in a wrong manner to reach hearts.** The point that has been urged upon my mind for years **is the imputed righteousness of Christ**. I have wondered that this matter was not made the subject of discourses in our churches throughout the land, when the matter has been kept so constantly urged upon me, and I have made it the subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people. {FW 18.1}

What was her concern? That justification would take a legal emphasis, that the law would be depleted of the true knowledge of Christ. Christ is the living law, the law of love, a living being, a person. When you hear the description of justification given by the lesson guide what do you hear? Do you hear mainly a legal description? Is it destitute of Christ?

What would Paul say if he were in class today and you asked him, “what did you mean by justification?” Most likely he would say, “I never heard of that word.”

Paul wrote in Greek, justification is a Latin based word. One of the reasons we hear so much “legality” to the plan of salvation is that our legal language is derived from Latin, and many of the terms in theology have a Latin base:

- Justification
- Sanctification

- Propitiation
- Expiation

When Paul wrote Romans he used these words:

Dikaosune – Righteousness or justice (Romans 3:21,22,25, 26; 4:3,5)

Dikaioo – To be or make righteous, to justify (Romans 3:24, 26 4:2,5)

Turn to Tuesday’s lesson and let’s read the first paragraph, “What is the idea...” thoughts?

What do you think of the conclusion? The Greek has three possible meanings, make righteous, declare righteous, consider righteous, do you agree with the lesson’s choice? Will God consider someone righteous who isn’t actually righteous? Does God deceive Himself?

Read next paragraph in Tuesday’s lesson, “Before this justification...” thoughts?

Do you have any problems with this description? Is it in keeping with Scripture?

So what does it mean to be justified by faith? Romans 3:21-31:

But now a righteousness from God, **apart from law**, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ **to all who believe**. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Thoughts?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{3:21} But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in everyway, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the 10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward. ²² This perfect state of being comes from God and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic groups, ²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. ²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of sin and has been falsely accused of being unfair. ²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so he would be seen as right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Thoughts?

When you justify the margin on your document what have you done? Have you declared it to be right or in line? Have you pardoned it? Have you put a special set of glasses on so that when you look at the document it appears to be in line? Or have you actually put what is out of line back in line?

Because of sin, what is out of line, out of harmony, that needs to be put back in line? Our hearts and minds! We no longer know or trust God!

Justification is so simple, it is Christ restoring humanity back into rightness with God in His own personhood on the Cross, when He overcame sin in His human brain. In Christ Jesus the human species was set right with God again. Now, how many specimens will join Him? As individuals we are set right with God when our hearts are won back to trust in Him! This restored trust is being set right with God again!

Romans 4:1-3

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Thoughts? What does “credited” mean? Does it mean to call something that is not righteous, righteous? Does it mean to have an angel in heaven give a notation in the record book – “Abraham is now recognized to be righteous – asterisk but we all know he really isn’t”? Or is it an actual change in Abraham?

The word translated as “credited” or “accounted” or “recognized” is the Greek *logizomai* and the Strong lexicon states, in regard to this word:

This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.

¹

So God doesn’t “reckon” someone as righteous that hasn’t had a change of heart to be right with God!

My paraphrase:

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G3049

Romans 4:1 What about our father Abraham, what did he understand about this issue? ² If, Abraham was somehow healed by his own efforts at keeping a set of rules or performing certain rituals, then he would have his own healing formula to promote, and would not need to trust in God. ³ But what does the Scripture say? "Abraham trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness, because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles."

A person cannot be justified, set right, without being changed in the process. In fact, it is the change, brought about by God, that sets a person right with God.

Thoughts? So, what might EGW be referring to when she states that false ideas of justification by faith are presented from pulpits?

Could she be referring to the legal, penal, payment, declared without change system taught?

The **wedding garment**, provided at infinite cost, is freely offered to every soul. By the messengers of God are **presented to us the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith**, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's word, free access to the Father by Christ, the comfort of the Spirit, the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God. COL 317.

Is she describing justification as something that happens in record books or within people?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it **not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins;

and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. **By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Can we be covered with the wedding garment without a change in the believer? Can we be justified without being changed?

Earlier we read a statement about justification being equivalent with the imputed righteousness of Christ – what is this?

Traditionally, Christians have claimed imputed righteousness is something God legally accounts to us, but which does not occur in us. They say imparted righteousness is what occurs within us.

Consider these EGW quotes and tell me if she is describing something that is merely accounted, declared, considered, reckoned, or is she describing something that is actually occurring within the believer?

- Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us

as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God's Amazing Grace 181.4}

- Is made and declared the same?
- Where does sin abound, in books or people?
- But **we all**, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed** into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God's Amazing Grace 96.4}
- We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}
- He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.**

TMK 206

If justification is receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ can it be done without a change in the believer?

Does God declare things to be which are not? How do we understand the aspect of justification which is God declaring us righteous?

When Jesus was on earth and declared that the leaders were of their father the devil – was it so, or was Jesus declaring something that was not so? And were they of their father the devil because Jesus declared it to be, or did Jesus declare it because it was so?

Is this an example of how we understand the declarative aspects of justification by faith? Does God declare us to be righteous when we are not? Does His declaration make it so, or after God having set us right with Him (justified us) does He also declare the reality if that change?

Now is some language easier to understand than other language? Was the reference just read fairly easy to comprehend? What about this one?

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and **accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.** Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory. {FW 103.1}

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. **The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety.** The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My child, I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy--eternal life--because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." **Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness,** stands faultless before God. {FW 103.2}

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly

undeserving. **He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins.** Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal. {FW 104.1}

Thoughts?

What does it mean to have our sins pardoned or forgiven? Here is another place the penal model makes a mistake – they describe forgiveness merely as legal pardon, which required Christ's death to achieve. Not so:

But **forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose.** When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

When we understand forgiveness is not mere pardon, but the actual process of reclaiming us from sin, of healing us, of removing sinfulness from our hearts and minds, then does it make sense why Jesus' death was necessary? Does it make sense how justification and pardon are the same thing?

If we include that justification is also the possessing the robe of righteousness and the robe of righteousness means the mind and heart are aligned again with God, does it make sense?

In Romans 3:4 Paul says, God may you be proved right or shown to be right, when you are judged. The Greek here is *Dikaioo* which is the same as in the earlier passages and means to justify. How do we understand it? Did God need to be pardoned? No! When we interpret justify as legal we miss the reality of what is transpiring.

Did God need to have the *allegations* of sin removed from Him? Did He need to have Satan's lies removed from His reputation in the minds of intelligent beings? Did God's reputation and character need to be put right in our minds again?

Why is justification the opposite of condemnation? Why are we condemned?

- “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**” Matt 12:33-37

What condemns us? Our very condition, either we have been justified and have Christ reproduced within, not by our work, but by abiding in a trust relationship with Him, or we have not.

What does it mean God forgives for Jesus sake? Jesus is the means of removing our sin and restoring us to Holiness. God could not accomplish His purpose without Jesus and what He accomplished. So it is because of Jesus success that God is able to heal us, or remove our sinfulness from us and restore us to His original ideal. And this is what it means to forgive – “reclaiming from sin.”

- God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself 2Cor 5:19

- For God so loved the world... John 3:16
- If God is for us... Romans 8:31

What about Jesus taking our sins? What does this mean?

Isa 53:4:

Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.(NAS)

Matt 8:16-17:

16 And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill**

17 **in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."** (NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ "paid a legal penalty" for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). He removed fear and selfishness and guilt and shame from our hearts and minds!

Isa 53:5:

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25:

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

By His scourging we are healed does not represent a “legal” transaction in heaven where God’s attitude toward us is “healed”, but instead represents a change in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

Interestingly, the words translated as “sins” and “sin” in this text come from the same Greek word.

1Pet 2:24 *hamartia* translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once.²

Why don’t they translate it as “sin” both times? Does it make it clearer?

My paraphrase:

He took upon himself our sinfulness, our terminal condition, in his own person upon the cross, so that we could be freed from sin and live the right way, loving God and others more than ourselves. You have been healed by the remedy his painful ordeal procured.

SUNDAY

The lesson does a good job of pointing out the purpose of the law:

“The law, however, reveals a person’s shortcomings and guilt before God. The law cannot remove the guilt; what it can do is lead a sinner to seek a remedy for it.” – Well said and that remedy comes from Christ!

²Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G266

MONDAY

Read top dark section, “Now the righteousness...” and then second paragraph, “This is, of course...” thoughts?

Question, where is this righteousness, which Christ achieved, which is provided by God and not by observing the law, applied?

Read middle dark section, “Righteousness...” thoughts? How do you hear this? What does it sound like?

What law is referenced in the statement? Is it the law of God? And that law is what? The law of love, which is the basis of life? So why does the law of love *demand* righteousness? Because it is the design protocol upon which life is constructed to operate.

Why does the law of health *demand* we breath?

Notice the only way we can *attain* righteousness is through faith. What does it mean to attain something? Is it merely something that is declared? If someone declares you have a million dollars, is that the same as having attained a million dollars?

So through trust in God we actually attain the righteousness of Christ. It is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. We become partakers of the divine nature – and this is why and how we, by faith can bring to God the righteousness of Christ.

How and why does the obedience of Christ get placed to our account? Because Christ’s character is reproduced within!

Consider a child with metastatic cancer....

WEDNESDAY

What is propitiation? It comes from the Greek hilasterion and is the name for the lid to the ark of the covenant. Christ is the place and means of restoring us to unity with God.

Read second paragraph, “The text also...” thoughts? Is it our historic behaviors or our condition of sinfulness?

Consider you are being recommended for a position in children’s division at your church, church board considers your name and someone brings up that when you 10 years old you had the measles. Would this disqualify you from being involved with the children? What if you had the measles now?

Is it our historic acts of sin that make us unacceptable or an unregenerated heart, a persistence in sinfulness?

And are “sins” remitted, or is sinfulness remitted? Do the historical facts of history ever get removed? Will Solomon be wiped out as he was conceived after David murdered Uriah and married Bathsheba? What remits, historic acts, or sinfulness in the heart?

Read third paragraph, “The word for remission...”

Remission here is not the best translation –

Romans 3:25

- Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; KJV
- God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— NIV
- whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; NRSV

It really is better as passing over, or passing by, in other words, God over looked the sins, or passed over them in order to provide remedy.

THURSDAY

Read middle paragraph, “Ellen G. White gives an...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Any questions from the lesson?