

Justified Freely by His Grace Romans 3:20-24

Throughout the Middle Ages, when men thought long and hard about how a man was made right with God, there were several prominent views held by the Roman Church.

- * **Many** believed God loved sinners in so far as they had the potential not to be sinners. A modern parallel would be someone promising God to be better in the future.
- * **Others** spoke of the necessity of a selfless act of contrition (sorrow) and love for God by natural means if a person was to be saved. A modern-day parallel would be a self-examination to see if “*you really meant what you prayed,*” or, being asked by another, “*were you sincerely genuine when you gave your life to Christ?*”
- * **Some** believed Justification in the eyes of God was a moral transformation of life. Thomas Aquinas, the great Catholic theologian, spoke of Justification as “infused grace.” The unjustified person was given inner grace to become justified. This “*justification*” was accomplished by cooperating with the Holy Spirit. A modern parallel would be “*God has done all He can do. Now it is up to you!*”

These false theologies of Justification led to doubt, fear, and finally, despair, for a sinner wishing to be saved. Romans 3:20-24 wipes away all doubt as to how a sinner is justified. **Justification is a forensic declaration**; that is, it comes from the world of **law courts**. In the **courtroom of God**, we, the guilty party, stand before the Judge who is righteous and **are declared** as if we were not only innocent but we are perfectly righteous.

- (a). Justification is more than being forgiven of sin.
- (b). Justification is the declaration by the Judge that the law has been perfectly kept.

(1). Justification is a problem for every sinner, the moral and immoral.

“*Therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight*” (v.20).

If you look to any of your obedience for assurance of your right standing in God’s sight, you are in trouble --- big trouble. No flesh is justified by personal obedience.

(2). Justification is a promise of God’s grace, not man’s methods.

Justification is something that happens “*outside of yourself.*” God justifies the ungodly. The ungodly never justify themselves before God. It is impossible. Does He simply “wink and overlook sin?” No, then He would deny Himself, for He is a “*just*” God and “*must*” punish sin. So, He has done a marvelous work.

(3). Justification is a product of God’s work, not man’s work.

“*Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (v.24). This redemption is the payment of a debt, and the release from bondage. God’s law demands death to the sinner, “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:4).

(4). Justification is a proclamation, not necessarily an invitation.

I proclaim the good news. I tell you what God has done for sinners in Christ. Then we’ll see whether or not the gospel is sweet to the taste. The justified find it sweet. The Father justifies, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies sinners --- hallelujah!