



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Romans 3:21-5:21

"Justification"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee and thankful to Thee that we have the opportunity to study the Scriptures again. We praise Thee for all of the revelation contained within it, and we especially praise Thee for those great sections of the Bible that have to do with our acceptance before Thee.

We specifically thank Thee for the divine plan of justification by faith on the principle of grace, and we rejoice in the experience of this. We pray that through our study Thou wilt enable us to come to a deeper appreciation of all that we have when we have Jesus Christ as our Savior. We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon this hour. We entrust it to Thee. We also ask Thy blessing upon the other classes of the night as well. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Not too many Sundays ago in speaking on the Epistle to the Romans, I commented upon the fact that you might charge me with tautology because I was going to be speaking on something of the same topic that had already been spoken upon in that series in the Epistle to the Romans. Well, now tonight we are continuing our series of studies in Basic Bible Doctrine, and I'm sure that you might charge me with tautology tonight and with some justification. With a lot of justification because we have been

studying the Epistle to the Romans together on Sunday which, of course, as you know is filled with the doctrine of justification by faith.

The apostle in the 3rd chapter, verses 21 through 26 unfolds in the normative passage on justification; the way by which God is just and the justifier of him who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we studied chapter 3, verse 27 through verse 31, and the consequences of justification, but in so doing, we naturally had to mention again the teaching of the Bible on the subject of justification by faith. And then last Sunday again, the subject was justification, and in case you are planning on coming this coming Sunday, the subject will be another aspect of justification because this is the great theme of Romans chapter 3, verse 21 through the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

So you may charge me with tautology and I won't be unable about the charge because that's what we are doing. We are talking a lot about justification, and then our evening meeting someone will get up and speak on justification by faith. So I hope that by going over and over this topic you do not lose your zest for the teaching of the New Testament on that topic. I likened the fact that we go over and over justification and still enjoy it to the way in which we may look at the sea or the ocean and find that the same kind of thing is true of it every time you look at it. There is a tremendous sameness about the ocean, but nevertheless, there is something that appeals to you every time you look at it. Certainly the sun is the same every day, but we don't charge God with tautology because he has the sun rise in the east and set in the west, and the same kind of action takes place in connection with it. We don't charge our cooks with tautology when they place bread on the table at each of our meals. So there are things in which we are constantly associated and yet we do not charge those who are responsible for them with tautology.

Justification we've been saying is a court term; a forensic term; a legal term. To be justified before God is to be declared righteous by God. About fifteen years ago, one of the outstanding New Testament professors Joachim Jeremias, who was for many years

was professor of New Testament at the University of Gottingen in Germany, spoke on the subject of justification by faith here in Dallas. Typical of a scholar and he is an outstanding one, one of the few really great scholars in the Western world on the New Testament, Professor Jeremias said that term justify meant to find God's good pleasure. Well, that isn't really specifically the meaning of the term, but there is certainly involved in it that idea. That when a man is justified before God or declared righteous before him, he does find God's good pleasure, but he finds God's good pleasure by the saving work of Jesus Christ; the merits of our Lord Jesus. The problem of a loving God is simply this, how can a loving God who is nevertheless a just God justify unjust men? The Scriptures tell us that God is just, and therefore, he must punish sin. He is a holy God, and therefore, he had great anger towards sin and sinners. "The wages of sin is death," the Bible says. And it says, "All have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God." How is it possible for a just God to justify unjust men? Of course, we might say well, we can keep the law perfectly, but this we have not done. And even if we were to keep the law perfectly from now till the end of our lives, when we got to heaven or when we got to the gates to heaven, we would be asked by the angels what about that which is past?

So we are all in debt, and we have not kept the law of God perfectly. The other thing that we might do is simply pay the penalty for the broken law, but this we cannot do and live. So we are in terrible straights. We are under a holy God, a righteous God, who punishes sin and we are sinners. We cannot keep his law perfectly nor can we pay the penalty and still live. And so God in the word of God has set forth for us a means by which unjust men may become just before God, and we know this is through the work that Jesus Christ did on the cross.

Now recently, I read a couple of times the Westminster Confession of Faith on justification. I don't read this because I think it's inspired. It's not inspired. There probably is a word or two in it that might be changed and improved. Therefore, it might be improved. What those words would be I don't know because this is a very accurate

statement of the doctrine of justification by faith. Let me read it again. "Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifies. Not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone. Not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing or any other evangelical obedience to them as they are righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them. They receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith. Which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God."

Now justification is found throughout the Scriptures. It is found in the Old Testament. Paul says in Romans chapter 3, "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets." In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the text to which I referred to again last Sunday concerning the gospel that it was promised beforehand by his prophets in the holy writings. So in the Old Testament we have many places in which the doctrine of justification by faith is mentioned. The great passage and the beginning passage in which that doctrine is set forth is the passage in Genesis chapter 15, verse 6 where it is said of Abraham that he believed in the Lord and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. The prophet Isaiah says, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." If one were to ask where is the origin of the doctrine of justification in the Scriptures? Well, some men like Professor Jeremias liked to say, the origin of that teaching is the Lord Jesus, and Paul got his teaching from him. But when you read the Bible you will see that Moses writes about the doctrine of justification by faith.

So it was in the Old Testament. Jeremiah speaks of the Lord our righteousness or our justification. In the gospels, the Lord Jesus tells the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. He speaks about how the Pharisee in the temple speaks of himself in a way such as this; I thank Thee Lord that I am not as other men. I'll give you those exact words. It is Luke chapter 18. He says he thanks God that he is not like other men,

"extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector." I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess. Incidentally, people today don't say that. They say, I thank Thee Lord I am not as that publican, but we have the same attitude.

Now on the other hand, "the tax collector standing by far off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus says after the parable is told, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

So we find this teaching in the gospels, and we find it manifested fully in the Epistles. Now what I would like to do tonight in order to do this just a little bit differently so you won't charge me with too much tautology, what I'd like to do is I would like tonight to study in a kind of a Bible reading the terms which are used in connection with justification. By so doing, go over something of the same ground again, but at the same time, do it in a little different way. After all, when you are being fed, you do like variety, don't you? Sometimes you like your meat cooked a little differently. Sometimes you like your vegetables cooked a little differently. And so we're going to have just a little variety tonight and what I want to do is to take a number of expressions that are used with the term justified, read them, and make some comments upon them. I think we'll have a better idea of some of the ramification of justification by doing it.

Now the first of the expressions I want you to notice is the expression, justification by God. Now that is set forth in Romans 3:26, but I want to refer to another passage too. In Romans 3:26 take your Bibles and turn to these passages if you can find Romans. Romans chapter 3 and verse 26 the apostle writes, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

Now you can see from this that it is God who is justifying. It is he who has set forth the Lord Jesus as a propitiation in order that he might be just and the justifier of him

that believeth in Jesus. In chapter 8 and verse 33 the apostle writes, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth."

Now the first expression then is justification by God. This is an expression that refers to the source of our justification. Put in another way, it is righteousness planned. God is the source of our justification, not man, not our free will, not any works that we might do, but God is the source of our justification.

Now in that 25th verse of chapter 3 it says, "Whom God who set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood." Jesus Christ is set forth as the one through whose merits we are justified. It's remarkable what men do when they preach the word of God. The priest in the large religious organization when he says things about spiritual things, he sets forth his own Roman sacramental system. He does not disagree with the evangelical who says that the Bible is the word of God. He doesn't disagree when the evangelical says that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and very God of very God; truly deity. He doesn't disagree when we say that Jesus Christ died as an atonement for sin. He doesn't disagree when we say that the Lord Jesus Christ was buried and that he rose again on the third day. He doesn't disagree that the Bible says that Jesus Christ is coming again.

What he does disagree about is the preaching of the terms by which Jesus Christ becomes ours. And of course, we say that a man is justified by God and that justification is received through faith. We set forth Jesus Christ. They set forth a sacramental system by which we come to receive the blessings of salvation. There are different things that other people set forth too. The preacher of doctrine sets forth a dogma. The preacher of experience sets forth a feeling. The preacher of practice sets forth an effort. God sets forth Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins.

Fundamentally, justification is a work of the Lord God. Now that's the first of the expressions. Verse 26 says, "That he might be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." That's the solution of the problem of the holiness of God and the love of God in conflict because men are sinners. God's love; desirous blessing. God's holiness;

required to execute judgment, but by Jesus Christ coming and dying for sin, the holiness of God is satisfied in our Lord's bearing the penalty of the broken law. The love of God is free to go forth to those whom Jesus Christ has died. He is just in the death of Christ, in the payment of the penalty by the substitute. He is the justifier of the individual who is of the faith in Jesus. Who has come to faith and that faith itself is given by God, that's the solution to the problem. When the Lord Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God was being just in punishing the Son, and then when Jesus Christ said it is finished, the penalty had been paid, and the love of God is free to save those for whom he came to die.

Isn't it interesting too, that on the cross when the Lord Jesus said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," that is the only time that the Lord Jesus ever addressed God by God in a prayer? All of his other petitions that he addressed to God in heaven were addressed to God in heaven by the use of the term, Father. "Father, forgive them for they don't know not what they do." "Father, into their hands I commit my spirit." But in that central utterance of the cross, it is "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me," because the relationship between the Son and the Father at the midpoint of that suffering is not a relationship of a Son to a Father, but of a sacrifice before a holy God. So the relationship is a judicial relationship, not a paternal relationship. So when he says, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me," even that expression is very significant and points to the nature of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, first of all then, we are justified by God. He is the source of the meritorious work of the Son of God by whom we are justified. The next expression that I want you to notice is found in chapter 5, verse 9. Not only do we read it is God that justifieth, but we read that justification is by blood. Chapter 5, verse 9 the apostle writes, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." What does he mean when he says justified by his blood? Well the blood is the ground of our justification. It is by virtue of the shedding of the blood that he gains the merit which is

imputed to us. Here we have the provision of the righteousness. I mentioned in one of the messages recently that there is a memorial panel to P.T. Forsyth in the new college chapel in the University of London. There on that memorial panel are the words "*Per crucem ad Lucem*" which means "Through the cross to light." That is a spiritual principle. We come to understand light through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. I almost made another statement, I think Sunday morning, "Christianity is not the sacrifice we make, but the sacrifice we trust." That too, was said by P.T. Forsyth and that statement, "Christianity is the sacrifice we trust," is ultimately a reference to the fact that we are justified by the blood of Christ.

No one will ever understand fully, of course, what is meant by the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think that we are justified in saying, that the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ may be likened to an iceberg in which you see very little on top; the great mass of the ice being under water. When we look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, it's something like that. What we see in Scripture, what we read about in the gospels, those statements that he made, the other incidental references that the apostles make to him, well those are things that are just the things that are revealed to us. What really happened between the Father and the Son is under the surface of the water, and we do not with our present understand or comprehend that the great act of atonement. The great thing that was done by the Lord Jesus Christ in God the Father in my opinion, we shall discover is like an iceberg, and when we get to heaven one of the things we will be doing throughout all of eternity is coming to understand just a little bit more of the infinite character of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest thing ever done for us was in a measure, a large measure, done behind our backs. We are justified by the blood of Christ.

Now another expression that we have is found in the 1st verse of this 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now if justification by God

expresses the source of our justification, and if justification by blood expresses the ground of our justification, the shedding of the blood, justification by faith refers to the means or instrumentality of our justification. Here righteousness is procured through the instrumentality of faith. Justified by faith, so the expression then, "therefore being justified by faith," refers to the instrumentality. What that means, of course, is that faith does not save us. It is Christ who saves us by faith.

Now I wonder if someone were to ask you, what is faith, what would you say? Well, some of you would probably say, well faith is believing God's word or faith is trusting God. That of course would be correct. How would you put it in just a sentence or so? What would you say if someone said what is faith? Well you know there is a text that the apostle speaks in a passage, which is a very interesting passage by itself, but which it seems to me is the essence of faith. Now I'm going to ask you if you will to turn to Acts chapter 27, and you'll recognize immediately when we say Acts chapter 27 that this is the passage in which the apostle is making his way to Rome on a ship and the storm comes up and it's such a terrible storm that it appears at one point that every life is to be lost. But in verse 21 of Acts chapter 27 we read,

"But after being long without food Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

By the way, isn't that an interesting statement, because that is an expression of the sovereignty of God? Notice he says, "God has given me all them that sail with thee." Now this was a word from the angel, so Paul is told that the lives of every single person is

going to be saved. That's the divine sovereignty. Now later on when individuals were in danger of desiring to leave the boat what do you imagine Paul would say? If he had been a critical Arminian who wanted to be critical of Calvinistic teaching, he would have said, well Paul should have just said no matter what you do you're going to be saved. So what difference does it make? God has promised that you're going to be saved, so you can do anything that you like. You see, we read in verse 30 that when they were having difficulty,

"And as the sailors were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under pretense as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul stood up and said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

Isn't that striking? He said every life is going to be saved, but at the same time the apostle said, if you don't stay in this ship you're not going to be saved. That's human responsibility, and here they are right in the same passage; the absolute sovereignty of God and of the prophecy and promise that not a life shall be lost, but they'll only be saved if they stay on the boat. That's good Calvinistic teaching. That's exactly what we say. We say that a man is saved through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and he is saved through the gospel. We say God has elected a certain people in ages past, but they must believe the gospel. We don't sit around and say, well the elect are going to be saved so what's the need of doing anything? We just sit down and rock and the elect will be saved. No. No. The elect are to be saved through the gospel. The elect are to be saved through preaching. The elect are to be saved through witnessing. The elect are to be saved through prayer. So the conjunction of the divine sovereignty and human responsibility is set forth beautifully right here.

Now I said we were looking for a definition of faith. Look at verse 25. This is about as good of definition of faith as you can find. "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." That's what it is to have faith. It's to believe that when God says something it will come to pass as he has been told. "I believe God that it should be as he has told me." That's faith. That's biblical faith.

Now when he says we are justified by faith, he means that faith is the hand of the heart. Faith is the instrumentality. Faith itself is a gift. It does not save, but it is the means by which we lay hold of the salvation provided through the Lord Jesus Christ. Incidentally, the whole value of faith lies in the object of faith or the basis of faith. The mightiest faith that trusts an insolvent bank will mean that you lose your money, because your money is safe or not depending upon the solvency of a bank.

Now if the First National Bank in Dallas were not solvent, you might say, I believe my money is safe in the First National Bank. I may say to you, what a minute. They're tottering. They're about to go under. In fact, I hear that they actually have gone under. They're not solvent. I believe. I believe. I trust the First National Bank. I believe if I just trust them hard enough my money will be safe. No. No. Your money is safe only if the bank is solvent. Faith doesn't save. You may say, I believe. I just believe. I just make myself believe, but if you're not believing in the proper object, you'll be lost. It's like crossing a bridge. If the bridge is faulty and if it will collapse under anyone's weight, you can say it looks good to me. I'll walk across it. No don't do that. Oh, I have confidence in that bridge. It was made by; I don't know who makes bridges. Who makes bridges? The Virginia Bridge and Iron Company; they make good bridges. But you take a step on it and you go under because your safety depends on the object of faith, not faith.

So you can say you have all kinds of faith, but if it's not in the right object, you're lost. Sad to say, that's the position that many people are today. They have faith in their church. The church doesn't save. They have faith in a preacher and what he tells them, but they lie just like others. They have faith in a false teaching concerning salvation.

They are told that one must be saved by the ordinances, through the sacramental system, but the only thing that will save is a sound solvent object of faith, and that's the word of God. If our faith is not in the truth set forth in the word of God, we're lost.

Now there's another expression that has caused a great deal of difficulty. It's found in James chapter 2. Here the brother of our Lord speaking about faith uses the expression, justification by works. Listen to what James says in chapter 2, verse 21 through verse 26. I'll read it while you're finding it. I'll give you one clue; it's in the New Testament.

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Now Luther said a man was justified by faith alone from chapter 3, verse 28. James says a man is not justified by faith only. This is why Luther said he thought this Epistle of James was a "right stroy epistle." Because he thought that in it there was some question arised against the Pauline teaching which he thought was the teaching that was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Now Luther understands the truth that is set forth here, because in his introduction to the Epistle to the Romans, he comments on the fact that a faith that saves must be a living vital faith. Well that's what James was saying. Luther didn't quite realize that. Later on in his life he said that they were going to use the Epistle of James to fire their stove in the University of Wittenberg in Germany. And he also said as I've said to you many times, that he said that if anyone could harmonize James with Paul, he could have his doctors beret. I've laid claim to that when I get to heaven I'm going to ask him for it, because I have harmonized James and Paul. But he too, did

really. He just said those things about it because well, he was Martin Luther. He said what was on his mind.

So he says you see then that,

"By works a man is justified and not by faith only. In like manner, also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

What is meant by justified by works? Obviously, in James' mind there is no contradiction with what Paul said because he cites the same text. He says here in verse 23, "Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness." So whatever meaning James put on justified by works, he didn't see it as contradictory of the Pauline teaching. What he really means to simplify it is simply, justification by works refers to the evidence of justification. It is the proof that we have truly been justified. In other words, we are justified by faith, but our faith if it is a living vital faith will always express itself in works. Just as Abraham's faith expressed itself in the offering up of Isaac, just as Rahab's faith expressed itself when she received the messengers and sent them out another way, so to be justified by works is to have demonstrated the reality of our faith by the kind of life that flows out of the exercise of faith.

When a man has been born again he's given a new nature that must express itself. The Reformers talked about the perseverance of the saints. They do by virtue of justification have a change of life which manifests itself and must manifest itself in some change of life. If a person says I believed in Jesus Christ and his life is exactly the same after salvation as it was before, we should not say to them, well you are justified, because the Bible does not give encouragement to the person who says he has believed in Christ if there is no evidence of it in his life. We cannot judge what a man does. There may be

something he's doing that we don't see. So we are not to tell him either yes or no, but we can say to him as far as the Bible is concerned, you have no reason to be told that you're saved if there is no evidence of the faith. If there is no evidence at all in your life and you know the things that I don't know, you should question whether you have truly believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Justification by works. It's possible to be very confused about this, because Paul says we are not justified by works and James says we are justified by works. But they use the terms in different ways. When Paul says a man is not justified by works, he uses the term works in the sense of the works of the Mosaic Law. We're not justified by that. When James says we're justified by works, he doesn't refer to the works of the Mosaic Law. He refers to the work of Abraham offering up Isaac, or Rahab receiving those messengers and sending them out the other way. Those are the kinds of works that demonstrate our faith. I've often used this illustration. Some of you have heard it before, but let's suppose when I get to be an old man that I write a little book and it's entitled, *Random Reminiscences of S. Lewis Johnson*, and since I'm from Charleston I have a chapter in that on life on the beach. Since I'm from Texas and know all about weather, I've entered a chapter on the weather, and since I'm very careful about my hair, [Laughter] I have also a chapter in that book on well, the hair; the human hair.

Now in one of these chapters I may say I on life at the beach, I say I hate cold waves. Then in the chapter about hair, I may say I love cold waves. Now I don't think you use that anymore ladies do you? Well, anyway at one time they use to have something called a cold wave, whatever that was. I haven't gotten that desperate yet. [Laughter] But anyway, then I might say on my chapter on the weather, I love cold waves. So in the same book I've said I love cold waves, I hate cold waves, cold waves are indifferent, but I won't be contradicting myself, because the subjects are different.

So when Paul says a man is not justified by works of the Mosaic Law, he is not saying anything contradictory to James, who says a man is justified by works of faith; that

is the faith must produce works. That's obviously what he had in mind because he says in verse 22 about Abraham, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works." In other words, the faith worked by producing works. And I should say to you as professing believers that are gathered in this audience, if you have truly believed in Jesus Christ there will be an evidence of the new life. I may not see it. Another elder may not see it. The deacons may not see it, but it will be there if you have new life. Justification by works; the evidence of righteousness, the proof of righteousness.

The apostle in 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 11 uses the expression, "justified by the Spirit". This is the verse, 1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." In the Greek text, the preposition "in" is used, so the meaning is literally, you were justified in the Spirit of our God. That's the sphere of our justification. That's the place that righteousness abides, "in the Spirit". We're not justified in the flesh of men. We're justified in the Spirit, and so the expression then is a reference to the sphere of the activity of God when he justifies us. It's in the Spirit.

Now in Titus chapter 3 and verse 7, we have the sixth of the expressions. This one I love. In fact, to tell you the truth, I think this is the most important of all of the seven expressions that I will point you to. This one is justification by grace. Titus chapter 3 and verse 7, here the apostle writes, "That being justified by his grace." This is the essence of the divine plan of justification. It is by grace. This is the principle of our justification. When men are justified, they are justified by grace. They are justified freely. They are justified not because of anything that is in them, but because of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our justification is a free justification.

You should put in your notes Numbers chapter 23 and verse 21, because there is a beautiful expression of justification by grace in that passage where God says he has not beheld iniquity in Israel nor has he seen evil in Judah, or I've forgotten the exact expression, but the important words are beheld and seen. Iniquity was there, but he has

not beheld it. He has not seen it. Iniquity is here, but God does not see it because he sees me in Christ. I am justified by grace. Some years ago I was on one of American Airline's planes and I was reading the Greek New Testament. One of the stewardesses was going up and down the aisle and I noticed she kept looking over at that book I had, and finally she couldn't resist speaking to me. We got into a conversation about the New Testament, and I got the opportunity to give her the gospel, but she was a member of that large religious organization and she said, well, as far as I understand it from my priest, he tells me because I'm a member of the church, I am in grace already.

Well, that is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that grace is the principle by which we are justified. It is something that God freely bestows upon us, imputes to us because of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. Incidentally, if you are ever speaking to someone who is a member of that large religious organization, justification by faith is something that priests believe in because their definition of faith is such that it has become a work. But if you say that we are justified by grace that is apart from anything in us, then there is conflict with the unbeliever. For the unbeliever cannot acknowledge that we are saved by grace. That is an offense to his pride and to his righteousness.

And finally, the apostle in Romans chapter 4, verse 25 uses one other expression concerning justification. He says here we are justified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The text reads, "Who was delivered up for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification," or literally, on account of our justification. What is meant here? Well, this is the seal of the righteousness or justification that we have. This is the proclamation of the fact that those for whom he's died have received their justification in principle. The resurrection is God's, "Amen," to Jesus Christ's, "It is finished!" When the Lord Jesus Christ is raised from the dead by the Father, it is as if the Father were to say just as plainly as this, I have accepted what Jesus Christ has done for those for whom he died. The representative man has died. He has borne the judgment of the broken law to the fullest. My law has been satisfied in his death. I raise him from the dead in proof of the fact that

he has finished the atoning work. And thus, those for whom he has died have now the standing before God of their debt already paid.

Now the process of their coming to an understanding of this and to the processes of the application of it will take place in God's own time down through the centuries as God brings his own elect to himself. But justification by the resurrection then, refers to the seal. It's the proclamation of righteousness to the world. The finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is accepted. "How shall a man be just with God," Job asks. Paul answers, "It is God that justifieth." And Paul says, "By him all who believe are justified from all things from which you cannot be justified by the Law of Moses." What a grand and glorious doctrine is justification by faith. We stand righteous before God, accepted in the Son of God, given a righteousness that is acceptable to the Lord God.

Now that is something to get excited about. May God help us to really appreciate what has been done for us. If you are here tonight and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are not justified before him. You are the object of the wrath and judgment of God. May God through the Spirit bring you to him. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for this wonderful truth of justification. It is always a constant marvel to us that we stand accepted before Thee in righteousness that perfectly satisfies the law of a holy God. Oh, Lord, may the gratitude that we have within our hearts express itself in true and effective Christian testimony we pray. For Jesus' sake. Amen.