



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 1:16-17, 2:13, 3:21-26

"Justification by Faith, part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading is in the Epistle to the Romans and I'm reading verse 16 and 17 of the first chapter. I myself told Ms. Ray that the Scripture reading would be 1:17 and 18 and I did it by memory, and it should be verse 16 and verse 17 for the Scripture reading.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Now, we're turning to the second chapter and reading one verse. It too has to do with the word justify or righteousness. I'm sure you know that the term righteousness and the term justification are essential English words that render the same Greek word. And so when we speak of justification we are talking about the means by which we are declared righteous, and righteousness is what we have as a result of being justified. But verse 13 of chapter 2 reads, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Now we turn over to chapter 3 and read a passage that has often been called the normative passage in Scripture on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. Beginning with verse 21 the apostle writes,

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (If you have a New American Standard Bible you'll notice that it reads slightly different from that that I have just read. The since, however, is essentially the same.) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Just this one comment, you'll notice that the apostle in the verse that I've read in chapter 1 verse 16 and verse 17 has stated what has often been called the theme of the epistle to the Romans, and it is the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ and the fact that it is revealed in the Gospel makes the Gospel concerning Christ the word concerning righteousness by faith. Then in chapter 3 the apostle speaks of it in more detail. May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word of God and for these great passages that we have just read. We think of the Romans who received this letter and who must have been greatly impressed as they heard the Apostle Paul expound the good news that he had been proclaiming primarily to the gentiles, but also to the Jews.

We thank Thee for the clarity of the message that one, through the saving work of Jesus Christ; through his death bearing our penalty and judgment, one may be declared righteous and have a status before Thee possessed of a righteousness that is pleasing to Thee and acceptable to Thee. And what, Lord, a magnificent good news this is for we are sinners and in ourselves have no righteousness. And not only do not have a righteousness acceptable to Thee, but in our own lives from our minds, through our emotions to our will we stand in sin

We thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast delivered us through the Gospel. And we thank Thee for the fact that the preaching of this word has been the means of our conversion. And we pray, Lord, that others too may through the good news that there is a righteousness acceptable to Thee through the merits of our Lord's atoning work. And we pray that many may respond to the word and become the heirs of the Abrahamic promises, blessed with a righteousness of God.

We ask Thy blessing upon the whole church today, upon this local body, upon other local bodies, too, where Christ is exalted and lifted up. We ask Thy blessing upon the sick who've requested our prayers. Especially for them we, Lord, intercede. We pray that by Thy grace Thou wilt touch them and their bodies, and minister to them through those that minister to them; their physicians, and their family and friends. We pray that by Thy grace we may have reason to give Thee thanks for physical ministry to the believing body of Christ.

We pray for this particular local body, for its outreach through the radio, through the printed page, and through the preaching and Bible classes, Oh God, may Thy hand be upon them for spiritual good for the blessing of the saints of God and for the salvation of others who do not know him. May our meeting today honor and glorify Thee. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for today is the first in a rather short series on new time religion. And our topic for today is "New Time Religion and Justification by Faith." The question that faces Evangelicals today is this, "Will the coming generation of Evangelicals bear much resemblance to the present generation?" And in all honesty, the proper answer would seem to me is it may be doubtful.

James Davison Hunter a few years ago, the book was published in 1987, wrote *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*. Professor Hunter is assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia and the author of other books on Evangelicalism. He understands Evangelicalism, I believe. In the book *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, he mentions the fact that this book is the result of an attitudinal survey over about five years. And the object of the survey, or the sources of his conclusions are Evangelical institutions, about nine Christian colleges, among them Whitten College, Westmont College; to just give you a flavor of the kinds of colleges that are the objects of the investigation. And about seven of our Evangelical theological institutions inclusive of Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Fuller Seminary, Talbot Theological Seminary, someone has called that "The Little Dallas of the Pacific Coast", and other institutions of a similar kind. In other words, the institutions are truly Evangelical institutions and stand really at the top of Evangelical thrust at the present time.

Professor Hunter, after the lengthy chapter on theology that opens the discussion, after discussing some of the ways in which Evangelicalism has been changing concludes with a comment to the effect that the tendencies that have been discovered in the survey and which have characterized Evangelicalism over the past years will probably escalate in the future. Now, for example, he discussed the Scriptures and discussed the fact that there has been a retreat from the viewpoint of Scripture that the Evangelical church has historically held. He also used as one of his tests in his survey the Evangelical Church's attitude to the Book of Genesis. It's remarkable how many people in the Evangelical camp regard Genesis and particularly its early chapters as symbolical chapters.

He also quizzed the institutions that we're talking about on the doctrine of eternal torment. And again, there has been a shift away from eternal torment; that is, a shift from evangelicalism's historical position. He also discussed the exclusivism of Christianity, and by that is meant simply that Christ is the only Savior. And shockingly there has also been a drift away from that among the people who attend these sterling evangelical institutions, and finally on the social Gospel. And in the survey on the social Gospel it was very interesting to note that about one third of the people who were part of the survey believed that the social aspects of the Gospel are almost as important as the evangelism of the Gospel. So what we are seeing is a definite drift, a drift that is a retreat and a retreat that appears to be a departure from Evangelicalism's viewpoints over the past decades. In the light of that, Professor Hunter has said, the tendencies will probably escalate.

What makes this also interesting to me at least is that a few months earlier in 1990 this year there was a very lengthy article in *Christianity Today*. *Christianity Today* has a hundred thousand people who read this magazine. It probably is regarded as the leading voice of Evangelical Christianity. And the title of the article was “Evangelical Megashift.” It's really a kind of a combination of articles in that Robert Brow, an Anglican Evangelical, writes the major article and then there is a response to it by some very well known individuals, such as for example; Donald Carson who is Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago; Clark Pennick, Professor of Theology at McMaster University, David Wells; Professor of Theology at Gordon-Conwell Seminary; Donald Bloesch, Professor of Theology at the University of Dubuque, Theology Seminary, and Robert Webber; Professor of Theology at Wheaton College. These individuals kind of divide up evenly, some being for this shift believing that it's good, some being doubtful about the benefits of it. What I wanted to do was to just take some of the terms that Mr. Brow suggests are terms that we should have different view about and discuss them.

He begins his discussion by mentioning the fact that, and I'd like to read this because I think it expresses what he's trying to say. He is talking about the fact that this

new model Evangelicalism has an emphasis on the warmth of family relationship when think about God. "And it prefers to picture God," he says, "as three persons held together in a relationship of love. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it argues, made humans in their image with a view to bringing many children to glory." I don't know of any Evangelical that would disagree with these facts. But then he says, "So instead of being dragged trembling into a law court," he's talking about the doctrine of justification by faith, "dragged trembling into a law court, we are to breath in the atmosphere of a loving family." So in other words, we are to think of the great doctrine of Evangelicalism, the Christian doctrine of justification by faith as a doctrine that we cannot really hold in the since in which it has been held centuries. That is that by justification be faith we are given a new status before God as righteous before him. He calls this being dragged tremblingly into a law court.

What is interesting about it to me is I happen to be reading parts of John Calvin's Institutes this past week thinking about some of these things. And it Mr. Calvin says that one of the great advantages of the doctrine of justification by faith, one of the great blessings of it is that when we come to faith in Jesus Christ and enjoy justification or the righteousness that God gives us then we face the judgment without trembling. I thought it was very interesting that the very thing that he speaks of as being dragged tremblingly into the law court is the very thing that Calvin says we do not have to do because by virtue of what Christ has done we have been legally before God given the status of justified individuals.

David Wells traces the shifts to the dismembering of the old model by the forces of modernity. Tradition and a transcendent order have lost their appeal. It's very striking when you think about it because when you say that tradition has lost its appeal and then you realize that this has had an affect on Evangelicalism you can see how the fades, and the thoughts and the ideas of the world affect us when we are not reading Scripture and comparing what we are hearing from the world with the things that we hear from the

Lord God in heaven. We do not have an appreciation for a transcendent order and because we as men and women do not have this in the world the result is that in the church there is also a loss of a sense of the transcendent order. Dr. Wells goes on to point out that we are interested in feelings more than we are interested in truth. And that surely is the attitude of the world about us and it illustrates the fact that the way the world thinks has great affects upon us who are with the Evangelical body.

Another interesting thing that Professor Wells pointed out was that the emptiness that we have is an emptiness, that is we men and women in the world, the emptiness is not supplied by clear, rational, logical thinking about the issues that we face but rather is supplied by the images that we often hear over the radio and see on the TV screen. You, as well as I, know that when you look at a TV program you are looking at little bits and pieces of information. The best kind of news program is simply that; a picture or two, a few words, and we are supposed to be up with the news. But what happens is that you are never forced to think rationally and logically. You're never really expected; in fact you cannot with the way it is presented, you cannot reason through a news program today. Just try it with Dan Rather sometime and try to put together one picture after another with "therefores" or "then", or "for this reason". All of those things are out and the emptiness that we have is supplied by images which do not have rational connection one with another. The result is, of course, that we do not think rationally and logically as a people.

"And finally," Dr. Wells says, "The social pluralism of our day (he doesn't say whether that is good or bad so far as the world is concerned.) there are many things about it that are very useful in our society, but what it has lead to is that the social pluralism of our day which is regarded as not only here with us but acceptable by those who control the media has had its affect on Evangelical Christianity." And so consequently the social pluralism is reflected in the fact that religion is looked at as a matter of private preference, and the things that we believe are not things in which we

are to think through and really seek to find out that which is better or more Scriptural, or more in accordance with the divine revelation, but rather think that the pluralistic society in which we are apart has affected our Evangelical thinking. And that's basically all right.. And a large percentage of the people in the surveys have reflected that fact.

Now, today I'm not going to take up his words. He listed a number of words that have new meaning. In fact, the article that Mr. Brow wrote had as a subtitle "Why you may not have heard about wrath, sin and hell recently." But other words also are mentioned by him, even the word church and the significant changes that have taken place in it.

What I would like to do is for the next few Sundays, the Lord willing, I'd like to devote time to some of these distinctions that represent a movement away from historic Evangelicalism in order to think through or faith to that extent. And I want begin an answer by challenging his view of justification by faith.

Now, justification by faith is not the kind of doctrine that ought to be central in the Christian church, but rather we should have something that represents only a loving family relationship. Now, let me say that there isn't anything in the Bible that suggests that we should not have a loving family relationship in the family of God. This is not a question of whether that is good or bad. That is good and we do not deny that at all and do not intend to deny it. But what we trying to suggest is that we should have both. We should have the loving family relationship, but we should also recognize that we stand justified before God forensically, legally before him by virtue of Christ's saving sacrifice on Calvary's cross. We don't want to say it's either or. In this instance we want to say that justification by faith is one of the greatest doctrines of the Christian faith and furthermore it leads to a loving family relationship, as well as a status before God that should give us confidence and assurance in the day in which we live.

Now, what I would like to do in the time that we have is to say a few words about contemporary views of justification. Then we'll talk a bit about historical views of

justification. And then I'd like to turn to the passage in Romans that we read and just draw from it a few points. If you would like a fuller treatment of it you can get the tapes on the epistle to the Romans give about ten years ago. My views haven't changed much since that time on that passage. And in that particular tape the text, chapter 3 verse 21 through verse 26 is expounded in more detail.

Contemporary views of justification; you remember I'm sure if you've been in Believers Chapel. It's been cited many times in the past not only by me but by others. Luther's famous word that justification by faith is the article of a standing or falling church. Luther meant by that that if we do not proclaim the justification by faith the church will fall, that the church exists by virtue of that great doctrine of justification by faith. If we do continue to preach it the church will stand.

A more modern expression of a similar viewpoint is the expression of G.C. Berkouwer, the well known Dutch theologian who is still living, incidentally, though retired now from the Free University of Amsterdam. And he said with reference to the doctrine of justification by faith that it defines the preaching of the church. In other words, if we want to know what the church should preach, justification by faith looms large in any message that the Christian church should give..

Roman Catholicism and justification; in Roman Catholicism justification refers to God's action in making man righteous by the infusion of grace. In fact, it is spoken of as *fideus caritate formata* -- faith formed by love and that wrought in the soul. In other words, inwrought love and good works become righteousness imputed to the believer. Now, there are many things about the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church as expressed in the Council of Trent and in the doctrinal pronouncements down through the years that are in thorough harmony with things that have been set forth by others who form part of the Christian community. But the significant fact of the Roman doctrine is that the benefits that are referred to here, which are different from the benefits that I will talk about in a moment, are nevertheless benefits that are ours only through the

sacramental system. In other words, if we talk about justification, and generally they tend to link justification and regeneration together as one doctrine, those benefits are not ours unless we have gone through what Jim Packer used to call the sacramental treadmill.

For example, let me illustrate; original sin according to Roman doctrine is removed by the waters of baptism, daily sin removed by the non-bloody sacrifice of the mass. The Council of Trent says, "Let him accurse who saith sins are not removed by the non-bloody sacrifice of the mass." Venial sins are sins removed by the oil of extreme unction. And other sins are removed by the fires of purgatory or simply by purgatory.

Now, I think you can see that this raises questions for Evangelical Christians. What is left for the cross of Christ where water, bread, oil and fire remove sins? What does the blood do? If so much done by works, little is done by grace. Now, liberal Protestants, however, have an entirely different doctrine. Their doctrine is essentially the work of man who through love and good works becomes right with God. That expresses justification. In other words, we are justified when through love and good works we do them sufficiently that they are pleasing to God. That's what it means to be right with God; to love and to do good works. All of the New Testament speaks against that. The apostle teaches us in this very chapter of Romans chapter 3, "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law."

Mr. Brow does not define what he believes actually about justification. He just simply says he rejects the law court model. So we cannot be critical of his particular view. He doesn't tell us precisely what it is.

Historical views of justification may be gathered, I think, around some important men. And any mention of important men in the Christian faith since the time of Christ must include Aurelius Augustinus or Augustine. Augustine lived in the 4th and 5th Centuries. He was called by Jerome "the second father of the Christian faith". He has also been called "the doctor of grace". And it is true that his understanding of grace was remarkable and in many ways he was the teacher of Luther and Calvin. As you know,

Luther was an Augustinian monk and it's obvious that he was greatly influenced by Augustine. Augustine, however, took the word *justificare*, the infinitive of the verb to mean the same thing as *justimficaræ* or "to make just". So he understood justification as a making just, not a declaring just but a making just. That has been essentially the view of the Church of Rome. In other words, justification is something wrought in us, which makes us acceptable to God.

Another Roman theologian whose works I have read with a great deal of profit is Anselm who was the Archbishop of Canterbury the later part of the 11th Century and the earlier part of the 12th Century. Anselm was truly one of the great theologians. His things that he has written on the trinity, on the spirit, on the son are still useful and also reflect the fact that he had not sat in front of a TV screen because all of his thoughts flow logically and philosophically; truly philosophically and logically. It's really an education to read some of the things that Anselm has written. His great book, the one that he is best known by is "Why the Godman?"

And in this *Cordeua homo*, what Anselm sought to do was to show that men are lost and that because they are lost they have an infinite debt to pay to God, that no man can pay his debt. And no one person who is a man could pay the debt of others and therefore there are must be a God-man; one who is one of us and who could stand with us and one also who is god and thus may give to his work the infinite value necessary to be a sacrifice for sinful men. And so that book is designed to show that fact, that the ground of the divine satisfaction, the satisfaction of this holiness and righteousness, the satisfaction of his claims against us is due. And incidentally, the ground of the satisfaction was due to the outraged honor of God. Because we are disobedient, his creature but disobedient, God conceived as a kind of feudal overlord and Anselm in the expression of the atoning work of Christ sets forth Christ as the one who in his work has satisfied the claims of God and God's honor particularly against men. And that work, the satisfaction theory of the atonement, you hear frequently in the pulpit of Believers Chapel because it

is a note in the atoning work of Christ that should always be there in my opinion at least. His work deeply shaped theology for centuries and actually still has an important part to play in Christian thinking in spite of Robert Broussier's rejection of the idea.

When we come to Luther and Calvin we come to two important men, both living in the 15th and 16th, well Luther in 15th and 16th Century, and Calvin in the 16th Century, we come to the two men who have probably been most responsible for the Reformation. Luther's breakthrough, what the Germans call his *Dortbruch* is a mystery. One does not know precisely where to pinpoint his breakthrough. Scholars love to discuss this and have discussed it for decades. Did he have his breakthrough in the earlier part of the 16th Century or a little later on? Or specifically was it in 1509? Or was it in 1513 and 1514? Or was it in 1518 and 1519? And the most recent believing scholarship has come to the conviction that probably Luther's thought changed continuously through that approximately ten year period of time.

But the concern of this Augustinian monk was how can I find a gracious God. Luther was a monk. He said if monkery ever got a man to heaven he would have had no doubt at all that he would be in heaven. But as he read the Word over and over again and saw that the word of God taught that we are not justified by works. It became obvious that he was not a justified man. He struggled with this over a period of time. He thought he said of God as a righteous God, but his idea of a righteous God was a God sitting on a cloud waiting to hurl thunderbolts of judgment against those who had disobeyed the law of God.

So the righteousness of God was the righteousness by which he judges men. Later on as he talks about thirty years later in some of his incidental comments made some time before his death, and maybe there is a little bit of haziness there, but nevertheless he said as he reflected on these things he came to realize that the expression "the wisdom of God" was the wisdom that God gives to men, the righteousness of God was the righteousness that God conveys to men. So he began to see from the reading of Scripture

that he had misread Scripture on those points. So his great concern, "How can I find," actually the "*Cregabine genedegan Gott?*" means something like, "How can I get a gracious God?" This ultimately had its result in the discovery given by the Holy Spirit of justification by faith. And expressed by the reformers, both the Lutheran and the Calvinists out of the Reformation was that man are justified on account of Christ, that this work on Calvary's cross through faith. Faith is the instrumentality by which we receive this righteousness, but the ground of it is not in us. The ground of it is in the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. And so justification was *propterea Christum parathetum* or "on account of Christ through faith", on the principle of course of grace because it's something we do not earn. It's something we receive as a gift.

Now, when Luther came to understand that he said, "When I came to understand that I felt as if I had entered paradise." And I am sure that Evangelical Christians who have come to understand what they are before God and then realize what God has done in Christ for them, they have something of the same since that Luther had when he came to understanding of this fact.

John Calvin added the simple point that this is accomplished because of our union with Christ as our representative head, that we were in him and what he did he did for those who were in him. And so consequently, to be in Christian is to have righteousness and to have justification, to have sanctification, to have ultimate redemption or glorification because of our union with the Lord. So he laid great stress on the union that has made it possible for Christ to be our representative or covenantal head.

Now, I'd like to turn for the remaining moments that we have to this passage in Romans chapter 3 and just make two or three points in order to specifically deal with Mr. Brow's statement that we ought not to have any sense of a legal relationship to God. This passage has been called the marrow of theology. It may not be the marrow of theology, but it is surely the normative passage on the doctrine of justification by faith. And the apostle in verse 21 having talked about the sin of the gentiles, and the sin of the Jews,

and the sin of all in "But now" of verse 21 marks the turn of his discussion from our sin to our justification in Christ.

He says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law, apart from the law, is manifested being witnessed by the law in the prophets. A true understanding of the law and prophets will indicate that men are saved not by the law, but are saved by grace through faith. (Paul is saying.) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe for there is no difference. In other words, the manifestation of justification provides relief for those whose mouths have been stopped.

Roy Jones used to like to say, "If you have not come to the place where your mouth has been stopped and you have nothing with which to commend yourself to God then you have not come to understand justification by faith. Your mouth must be stopped you have nothing with which to commend yourself before God, not one thing. You stand as guilty as a sinner as under the judgment of God because of your guilt."

Now, he goes on to describe what this is. He says in verse 24, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Now, I must stop for one thing and that is, "What is meant by the expression?" If you'll remember I made reference to the fact that in the Roman Church in Augustine too the term justify has meant to make just. But Luther and the Protestant reformers and Evangelicals generally have contended that this word does not mean to make just, it rather means "to declare just" or "to declare righteous". There's a whole lot of difference between the two; "to declare righteous" and "to make righteous".

Now, the creeds have generally held to the view that this word means to declare righteous. It has sometimes been said by New Testament scholars that this is a view of the term that is not found in the Old Testament. That is not true. In fact, in Deuteronomy chapter 25 and verse 1 we have a text in which the word clearly means, "to

declare righteous". The author of this particular book, Moses writes, "If there be a controversy between men and they come unto judgment that the judges my judge them then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." Well, now if men are righteous all ready you do not make them righteous in any kind of judgment such as this. You declare them righteous. If they're wicked they are all ready wicked. And when they are condemned they are simply declared to be what they are. Notice the text. It's very plain. "Then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." This is not the only place in the Old Testament where this use of the Hebrew word as well as of the Greek word is found.

Now, in the New Testament we have in Romans chapter 2 verse 13 the passage that I read in the Scripture reading, Paul saying, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." This is the first instance of the word justified, the verb, in this book and it's clear it means to declare just rather than to make just here because he says, "The doers of the law shall be justified." If they're doers then they don't need to be made just. They're all ready just. They're doing the law. So when you justify people who are doing the law you are declaring them. You're making a declaration. You're making a legal declaration that they are just. In other words, that's a viewpoint past a convent. That's essentially what Mr. Brow does not like in Evangelicalism of the past decade. He doesn't like the idea of us having to stand before God and to have our relationship to him on legal grounds. Now that's not the only kind of relationship we have. Don't forget that. We're just talking about the doctrine of justification by faith.

When we turn over to Romans chapter 5 and verse 17 listen to what we read here, "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more are they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." So righteousness here is regarded as a gift, something given because someone has met our legal obligation; the Lord Jesus in his saving work on Calvary's cross. And as a

result of that we receive the gift of righteousness. It's not something we do to earn. It's something given to us.

And then over and over in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the apostle puts two words together that are very important. He puts the word righteousness together with the verb reckoned over and over again. From verse 3 right on through the end of the chapter he talks about being reckoned righteous, reckoned just, reckoned righteous. Not made righteous, but reckoned righteous.

This is not something brought in by the New Testament writers only. This is something that is derived from Hebrew thought in the Old Testament and it's a dynamic thought because it's something that God does for us which we could not do. As a matter of fact, what this really means is that by virtue of what Christ has done we can be sure we have convental membership in the family of God.

What is the family of God? Well, if we go back to the Old Testament we read of the Abrahamic promises made in Genesis chapter 12. Those are the fundamental salvific promises of the word of God. And we find the Apostle Paul in to the Galatians in the third chapter there at the end of that chapter saying something that confirms that statement. I'd like to confirm it because sometimes it's not really understood. He writes, "For as many as you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither bond nor free. There is neither male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Now listen.) And if ye be Christ's then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. What promise? The promises made to Abraham.

Now, how do we become heirs according to the promise? Well, in Galatians chapter 3 he makes it very plain. He's all ready talked about that when he says in verse 6 of that same chapter, "Even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness, know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

So justification is simply the matter of covenant membership. Who are Abraham's children? Well, Abraham's children are those who have been justified by faith. They are those who believe. They are Abraham's children. And if they're Abraham's children they inherit all of the promises that are the Abrahamic promises set forth in the word of God.

So it really comes down to something very personal. And when Mr. Brow talks about a loving family relationship, which he prefers to being dragged tremblingly into the law court. That's of course an overstatement and untrue. We have the finest of all family relationships in that it's a family relationship of individuals who've been brought to faith in Christ and who enjoy together a relationship of sonship to God and heirship of the great Abrahamic Salvific promises.

Now, the apostle talks about the means by which this is done. And he says in Romans chapter 3 and the verse that follows, or the part of the sentence that follows, "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" A satisfaction; the Lord Jesus as the one who in his saving work on Calvary's cross meets the claims of a holy and righteous God in heaven for us, and in doing it for us we through faith may enter into the enjoyment of the blessings of justification which Christ has accomplished.

I'm not apologizing for the word propitiation. It means satisfaction. I don't like to apologize for theological words anymore than men who deal with computers apologize for the terms that they use. They talk about disks. They talk about interfaces, and they talk about lots of other things that those of us who use a computer hardly understand. If they would just give me a glossary I would greatly appreciate. I have to learn it by making mistakes.

But at any rate, it's necessary no doubt for their particular technical understanding of things. I have doctors and some of them love the technical language and some like the direct approach. And as a matter of fact, I like both of them because I do like to know. But when a doctor tells me in medical terms what is wrong with me, almost inevitably I

have to say, "Now, what does that mean? Put that down on my level. Tell me what it means."

When I got hepatitis I called Dr. Howard, or Dr. Howard started it because he looked at my face and he said, "You need to let me check your blood." So I went by his office and had the blood checked and I waited. And the next day he called me; no results. Now, I love the way he reported it to me. I picked up the phone. He said, "Lewis, your blood's in terrible shape." [Laughter]. That's all he said, "Your blood's in terrible shape." Then when he said, "I'd like for you to go into the hospital for a couple of days," I meekly and docilely went. That prepared me from everything. "Your blood's in terrible shape." Who wants blood in terrible shape? [Laughter]. And so well, we would like language like that in Scripture. But after all, terrible shape could mean a lot of things, too.

And I need not develop that point. But at any rate, in the word of God Christ is the propitiation. He has satisfied the righteousness and holiness of God. And you may call that something that you do not get any blessing out of, but I find it great for the simple reason as Calvin said, "when the judgment comes I won't enter into that judgment tremblingly because Christ has worn the judgment for me." And so I do not have to enter that judgment tremblingly in pure abounding, astounding grace.

As one Lutheran commentator put it, "Christ has been responsible for the justification of the saints of God. And so I sing, "Awake my soul and joyful lays, and sing Thy great redeemer's praise. He justly claims a song from Thee, his loving kindness, O how free." Why anyone should not have a magnificent sense of exaltation over what Christ has done in paying my debt? I don't understand. That means so much to me.

And he says, "It's done. To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed," because in the Old Testament could have said, "Where is God's judgment? You said God is a just God, but no judgment is coming or has come. Where is the righteousness of a just God?" Well, on Calvary's cross we learn the answer. And there

when the Son of God cried out, "My God, my God, Why hast Thou forsaken me?" God was meeting out upon him the judgment for sin; my sin. And the evidences that that is true await us in the future.

So it's striking. Isn't it? God has first place in the cross. We think of the cross as we should have first place. No. He says, "To declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God, to declare I say at this time his righteousness both for the Old Testament era and for the New Testament era that he might be just." That might terrify some people, but read on. "And the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

The open scandal of "Where are the wages of sin?" is answered by the saving work of the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross. I like the story of the old woman who was on her death bed and someone was talking to her and said something about what was her confidence in this time. And she said, "I'm resting in the justice of God." And the individual by her bedside said, "Surely you mean resting in the mercy of God." She said, "No, resting in the justice of God." That Jesus Christ has paid her debt and has stood for her, and by virtue of that she possesses a righteousness that is acceptable with God. That was Luther's *Dortbruch*, his breakthrough to discover that great fact. He never forgot it and his theology afterwards was expressive of that great fact.

Job said, "How can a man be just with God?" Paul tells us very plainly, "Through the justifying work of the Lord Jesus Christ." In other words my Christian friend and my non-Christian friend, as result of what Christ has done Calvary's cross we can say, "God is propitious. He has been satisfied in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ." We don't have to beg, cajole, plead, wheedle, or coax mercy from him. The Lord Jesus has satisfied his claims against sinners and the one term by which we respond to the Gospel and through which we receive its benefits is the term, "Believe him." Believe the message. Believe the message about yourself, of course. And then believe the message that Christ has paid the penalty. He's made the propitiatory sacrifice and you may go free.

We talked about exchange. That's become incidentally a New Testament word among New Testament scholars, "the exchange". And we mentioned last time Samuel Rutherford's use of the term a long time before there were any sound New Testament scholars around in the since that we have them today. And he used the expression in old Scottish that Christ wants to coss lives with you -- that is barter lives with you and make a nifer [ph55:40], that is make an exchange.

Well, one of the oldest of the writings of the Christian era is the Epistle of Diognetus, and this epistle probably in the late 2nd Century, perhaps the 3rd Century has this little statement which I think is very much to the point. The author of the epistle says, "Oh, the sweet exchange. Oh, the inscrutable creation. Oh, the unexpected benefits that the wickedness of many should be concealed in the one righteous and the righteous of the one should make righteous many wicked." The exchange; this is what we enjoy as a result of what Christ has done. And when you believe in him you have the benefits. You stand before God justified, declared righteous by him. Making us righteous is the work of sanctification. And as the years go by God continues his work through the spirit. But I stand justified. I have a new status before him of righteousness. What could be more marvelous than that?

I close with just the reading of a couple of stanzas of a hymn that I was reading yesterday. "Brightness of the Father's glory shall thy praise unuttered lie. Fly my tongue, such guilty silence, sing the Lord who came to die. (Hallelujah. Amen.) From the highest throne in glory to the cross of deepest whoa, all to ransom guilty captives, flow my praise forever flow." Hallelujah. Amen. That's how I feel. I hope that you too have Christ and having him have the righteousness that satisfies the claims of the infinite eternal triune God. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so thankful to Thee for all of the blessings that are ours through the Lord Jesus Christ. And we confess that we rather resent anyone claiming the

name of Christ who speaks harshly about justification by faith through grace. We rejoice in all that the apostles have set forth and especially in the fact that we have in our possession now, had it as a new status that we are just before Thee. Not because of anything in us, but because of the gift of righteousness won by the labors of our Lord on Calvary's cross.

If there should be, Lord, someone in this audience who has not yet come to the conviction of

[AUDIO ENDED ABRUPTLY]