

Being

now

justified

by His

blood ...

... Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

[Romans 5:9]

Possibly the above words make little sense as you currently read them but they are in fact focused upon one of the great themes of the Bible and form part of the answer to a question asked by a man centuries ago and reiterated since by many more sincere individuals – ***“how should man be just with God?”*** (Job 9:2) that is, to have a ‘right standing’ before God.

Man once enjoyed perfect discourse and communion with God his Maker. There was nothing to disrupt the harmony. Man brought in the enmity by his disobedience to God’s command. Man became a sinner, guilty before God and powerless to clear himself. Death came in to afflict man with the prospect of judgment afterwards.

Job, in asking the earlier question had an appreciation of man’s dilemma due to the now conflicting moral state of man with God. The real issue is – how can an intrinsically pure and holy God without compromising His righteous character, re-establish peace, by justly allowing guilty man to be fully acquitted from the penalty he deserves for his sin? God has accomplished this in the Gospel.

Being justified freely by His grace

It cannot be overemphasised, that the works of a man, whether in keeping God’s law or the moral law of the conscience, have not the slightest influence in the matter of man’s justification for ***“By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for***

by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). God primarily gave man a conscience and later His written law code to prove to man his guilt, to show sin up for the defiling thing that it is.

None of us have 'clean hands' before God and therefore first and foremost the basis of justification had to find its movement solely on the grace of God. This is the unmerited favour of God, reaching out to a world of sinners deserving of eternal judgment, every one of us: ***"... For there is no difference: 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"*** (Romans 3:22-24).

Being justified by His blood

Being ***"freely justified by His grace"*** emphasises that as far as man is concerned, his justification is without merit and to be freely received from God on the grounds of redemption. However as far as God is concerned, the price for man's justification involved significant cost both to Himself and His eternal Son.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ, who as a perfect Man paid that price and thus established the basis upon which God could reach out to a fallen world. Christ's precious blood was shed on the cross of Calvary where His life was laid down as a sacrifice for God on man's behalf. God is unable to overlook any sin: that would be totally unrighteous as all wrongs demand justice even though it appears that so many get away with so much, ourselves included.

Many find God's remedy for man's sin by the shameful death of Christ on the cross offensive yet never considered how offensive their own personal sin is to God. Some think it foolishness and too simplistic yet never realise the profoundness of wisdom involved, blinded by their own folly. One early preacher of the gospel once wrote this: ***"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness"*** (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Being justified by faith

God has moved out in grace and Christ has offered Himself to establish the basis of man's justification before God. One further step is necessary: the exercising of faith on the part of the guilty to bring God's acquittal into effect. ***"To declare, I say, at this time His (God's) righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"*** (Romans 3:26). God's righteous demands have been satisfied by the death of the Son and a state of righteousness can be imputed or reckoned to the believing one. Quoting later in the same epistle, ***"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*** (Romans 5:1). Peace lost at Eden can be regained through the cross.

The truth of substitution is brought into effect for those individuals who rest their case with the death and resurrection of Christ alone. Having abandoned their former life of sin and self effort, their faith and confidence is in Christ Jesus alone accepting Him as their Lord and Saviour, their Mediator, their Advocate and Intercessor. Their acquittal by God is absolute: nothing or nobody is able to overturn or quash the judgment that God decrees: ***"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth"*** (Romans 8:33).

Justified by works

The Bible only speaks acceptably of those who are justified by their works in the sense of works that demonstrate the reality of faith in God and Christ, the sign of genuine conversion. Works for God are the fruit not the means of justification, the outward expression of an inward change. If we seek to justify ourselves by our own efforts or works we reject the council of God against ourselves and face certain wrath and will suffer eternally for our own sin. It is when we accept God's verdict against us and God's means of justification for us that we confess His word as being true and thus ***"justify God."***