

Romans 5:1 (Part 1)

Justification by Faith

Are you ready to consider a most fascinating dimension of the Christian life? This section tells us that Jesus did more than get us out of hell and into heaven. His obedience, coupled with the faith and repentance God requires from the depraved, is why the Father justified us! He made us not guilty by saving us through His Son. He did it in the instant of time that we, while lost and depraved, realized our need for a Savior, repented of our sins, and asked Jesus Christ into our hearts through faith. This news is not merely exceptional! It is life!

Justification was defined earlier as “just as if I never sinned or ever will sin again.” God, in a moment’s time, ushered us out of a state of condemnation (Ephesians 2:1-3) and made us righteous (right) on the basis of our own personal repentance and faith exercised while depraved! Paul speaks of this astounding transformation in Romans 5:1:

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1)

The phrase, “*having been justified by faith,*” is not Paul teaching that “*faith*” saves. “*Faith*” has never saved anyone. God does the saving. Man does the believing. Thus, “*faith,*” exercised by the depraved, cannot be classified as a work—as verified by Romans 3:28 and Romans 4:4-5.

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. (Romans 3:28)

Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, (Romans 4:4-5)

“*Faith*” and “*works*” are contrasted. Thus, to exercise “*faith*” while depraved cannot be classified as a work (although some theologians believe otherwise). This truth will be confirmed to a greater degree as we continue.

Paul uses “*Therefore*” as the first word in Romans 5 because the first four chapters of this epistle prove that God bestows righteousness upon those who repent and believe while depraved. We were “*justified*” by God as a result of exercising faith prior to being born again! Yes, God saves; man believes. However, man in his lost (depraved) state must believe before God will bestow salvation. Furthermore, “*...it [the salvation that comes through God alone] is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace...*” (Romans 4:16). Thus, justification is available to man solely as a result of God’s grace.

I view justification in this manner: Several years ago, in the midst of my depravity, I saw my need for a Savior (repented, in other words) and exercised personal faith. I did this by looking to heaven and saying, “God help, I need a Savior.” God then did all the

rest. Much more occurred than initially meets the eye, so let me attempt to explain by offering the following illustration.

When I gave my life to Christ (when I exercised personal repentance and faith while depraved), God, seated in heaven behind His huge gold desk, took His huge gold gavel (no desk or gavel are mentioned in Scripture—again, this is an illustration), stood up behind His desk, raised up on His tip-toes, and with all the force that He could muster through that right arm of power, struck that huge, gold, glistening desk. As a result of this powerful act, all heaven shook—even the angels took notice—and every eye in the heavenly places gazed at the Creator. As He prepared to speak, they could not help but notice the love and compassion that characterized His stature. As they gazed more intently, they could see tears of joy rushing down those cheeks from which the glory of His Majesty was manifested. Then, when everything in heaven settled, the Creator pointed at me. (Here is where our illustration ends and Scriptural reality kicks in, although some of what is stated previously may very well have occurred.) With great boldness and authority, and yet with great joy, my God said the following: “You are holy, perfect, redeemed, complete, blameless, accepted, glorified, a brother of Christ, not condemned, a saint, a son, forgiven, and I take you as my very own!”

Wow! Can you believe that the Father did all of that (and more) in an instant of time? This entire transformation occurred at the point of justification, subsequent to our exercising repentance and faith while depraved. God did it all through His grace!

Let’s observe a few New Testament verses that confirm what has been stated regarding justification. The verse reference is listed on the left. What God says about us in each verse is recorded on the right. Keep in mind that everything addressed here happened in an instant, at the point of justification. Bask in the greatness of what you find. These verses describe who you are at this moment in time if you are a believer. You most definitely are not required to experience physical death before the truths recorded in these passages apply.

**What Happened at the Point of Justification:
A Description of the New Testament Believer
The New Man (New Self)**

2 Corinthians 5:17	New Creation
Galatians 2:20	Crucified With Christ - Christ Lives In Me!
2 Corinthians 5:21	Righteousness Of God
Romans 8:1	Not Condemned
Ephesians 1:13	Sealed In Him (Secure)
Ephesians 1:4	Holy And Blameless Before Him
Ephesians 2:6	Seated In The Heavenly Places
Colossians 3:1	Raised Up With Christ
Colossians 3:3	Have Died — My Life Is Hidden With Christ In God!
Colossians 3:13	Forgiven
Ephesians 4:32	Forgiven
Colossians 2:13	Forgiven
Romans 8:30	Justified, Glorified
Romans 6:6	Old Self (Adamic Nature) Was Crucified
Colossians 3:9,10	Laid Aside Old Self, Put On New Self
Ephesians 4:22-24	Laid Aside Old Self, Put On New Self
Hebrews 10:10	Sanctified
Hebrews 10:14	Perfected
Hebrews 9:28	Forgiven
Ephesians 5:30	Member Of His Body
Colossians 1:22	Holy, Blameless, And Beyond Reproach
Colossians 2:10	Complete
1 Corinthians 1:30	In Christ, Righteous, Sanctified, Redeemed
1 Corinthians 1:2	A Saint
1 Corinthians 1:8	Confirmed To The End, Blameless
1 Corinthians 6:11	Washed, Sanctified, Justified
Ephesians 2:19	Member Of God's Household
Philippians 3:20	Citizenship In Heaven
Colossians 3:12	Holy And Beloved

Colossians 2:12.....Buried With Him
1 John 5:20In Christ
Jude 1Kept For Jesus Christ

Everything listed in the previous thirty-two verses pertains to the New Testament believer who, while depraved, repented and exercised personal faith. Can you see why the gospel is called *The Good News*? This truth is not “positional” truth, as some theologians have incorrectly assumed. It is much more. It is reality! “Positional Truth,” which is taught in many Christian circles, is misleading. It carries with it the idea that God somehow sees us in the manner that these verses describe us—but in actuality we are just lowly sinners saved by grace, who will someday (in heaven) become all of these things.

Scripture presents a totally different view, for we are now (present tense) everything these thirty-two verses say about us—and more. The evidence is in the tenses of the verbs used in these passages. The action is past tense action that occurred when we met Jesus. Therefore, we are now holy, perfect, righteous, complete, and all of the rest—not lowly sinners saved by grace. In fact, we are saints who sometimes sin! Can you see the difference in these two perspectives? Pray that God will enlighten your spiritual eyes so you might perceive yourself as He sees you.

The Father’s view of the New Testament believer means that He isn’t required to look at us through Jesus to “stomach” what He sees. The Father loves us because of who we are—because of what He has made us into. Jesus alone is the reason the Father could make us new, subsequent to our repenting and believing while depraved. But our identity (who we are as the Father’s children—new creations) allows Him to view us as the apples of His eye. He isn’t required, therefore, as I supposed as a new believer, to view us through His peripheral vision due to a lowliness we possess as His sons. He can look at us straight on because of what He made us into at the point of justification, for He totally accepts us as His holy and eternal possession. As a result, He is accessible, ready to listen to our every concern—and ready to defend us to the very end.

The writer of Hebrews tells us “*There remains...a Sabbath rest for the people of God*” (Hebrews 4:9). New Testament believers can “rest” because God, in an instant of time, made us into the most holy and righteous beings imaginable. The work is a finished work. We are blameless before Him. We are also set free to enjoy, for all eternity, all that Christ has done for the redeemed.

Because we are blameless and free, our focus should center on knowing—really *KNOWING*—Christ and yielding to His indwelling presence (Philippians 3:10; Galatians 2:20). When we do, we are “*filled*” with God’s Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), and those around us cannot help but see Jesus. Thus, we “rest” as God lives His holy and omnipotent life through us. What a deal!

Examining Ephesians 1:4 in greater depth would be wise as it is the most debated of the thirty-two verses listed earlier:

...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love (Ephesians 1:4)

Paul teaches that the New Testament believer is made “*holy and blameless*” at the point of justification. This truth, although rejected by some (maybe many), is not a major source of tension within Christ’s body. The phrase, “*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,*” is the cause of disharmony. Some people use these words in an attempt to prove that God chooses (elects) some persons to salvation before they are

born—in fact, from eternity past by means of an eternal decree. Are they correct? Let's allow the full counsel of God's Word to provide the proper answer.

When we made the choice to accept Christ as Savior (while depraved), we were placed into Christ through the avenue of the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 12:13), into the Father's "*chosen one*" (Luke 9:35; Isaiah 42:1), and made "*new*" (2Corinthians 5:17). This action by God on our behalf, subsequent to our exercising personal repentance and faith while depraved, is the only means through which we could enter into Christ's chosenness! Once in Christ, the Father's "*chosen one*" (Isaiah 42:1), we also received His kind of "*life*" (Colossians 3:4), eternal life, having no beginning and no end. Consequently, once we were placed into Christ and received eternal life, the Father saw us as having always been in Christ, even though our entry point into Christ was after we repented and believed while depraved. This sequence makes it possible for us to have been chosen "*...in Him before the foundation of the world...*," even though we did not accept Him until almost two thousand years after the cross.

Thus, the phrase, "*chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4a), does not communicate that God selected us to salvation before we were born—selected us to be placed into Christ from eternity past. It means, rather, that we were chosen once we were placed into Christ, into the Father's "*chosen one*" (Isaiah 42:1), subsequent to our exercising personal repentance and faith while depraved. Because Christ possesses eternal life, life with no beginning or end, we received eternal life the moment we were placed in Him. Consequently, the Father sees us as having always been in Christ—even "*...before the foundation of the world...*" (Ephesians 1:4a)—although our entry point into Christ occurred when we repented and believed while depraved.

Jesus was chosen to office—the office of Messiah. He was not chosen to salvation. Accordingly, all New Testament believers, as a result of being placed into Christ (after repenting and believing while depraved), receive a special office, or "*gift*" (1Peter 4:10), so Christ's body might function efficiently and effectively to the Father's glory. To this office or "*gift*," we were chosen once placed in Him—subsequent to repenting and believing while depraved. Note: *Our God's Heart as it Relates to Foreknowledge - Predestination* and *God's Heart as it Relates to Sovereignty - Free Will* address this subject in much greater depth.