



7-16-17 Sermon Discussion Guide “Justification”



Context

Throughout this summer we are talking about words and ideas that we often hear in church but rarely define. This summer provides a chance to hit “pause” and reflect upon these ideas, their importance, and their impact upon life. This series began by asking the question, “What is theology?” Since then, we’ve been discussing God – the nature of the Trinity, God’s will, how God created all things and acts within creation. This week we look at justification – how does God save us?

Checking In

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

Introduction

How are we saved? From what are we saved? How do we know we are saved? These are all questions that pertain to our understanding of the doctrine of justification. This word has a legal, forensic sense to it. One who is justified is one who’s been made right. Theologically speaking, justification is about how we are made right in the sight of God.

Discussing the Text – Romans 3:21-31, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 9:11-15

1. If you had to summarize Romans 3:21-31, what would you say?
2. Paul says in Romans 3 that righteousness is given through Christ. Define righteousness.
3. Romans 3:22 has been the topic of intense debate. The Greek language is ambiguous. The passage could equally read “We are saved through *faith in Christ*” or “We are saved through *Christ’s faithfulness*.” What difference do these two translations make?
4. What does it mean in Romans 3:25 that God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement?
5. How does Paul make a connection between faith in God and boasting? He does this in Romans 3:27 and Ephesians 2:9.
6. Paul says we are saved by grace, through faith. What’s going on how? What’s the relationship between, grace, faith, and being saved?
7. How does Jesus’ sacrifice, described in Hebrews 9:11-15 bring about our salvation?
8. What do you think Paul means when he says that God’s grace is a free gift in Ephesians 2?

So what?

1. If the starting point in our justification is God’s grace, does that mean God loves everybody?
2. If we are saved by grace, does that mean we have any say in the matter?
3. If we are saved by God’s grace, then what’s the role of evangelism?
4. How does starting with God’s grace give you hope in life?
5. How does God’s grace influence your understanding of how God response when you sin?
6. When God forgives us for our sins, does he forgive us for all of our sins? What’s the role of ongoing confession of sin? What happens if we fail to confess certain sins?
7. How have you experienced God’s grace?
8. How has God made you righteous? If you aren’t living righteously, does that mean you haven’t experienced God’s grace?

Prayer

Share something you for which you are thankful and/or something for which you need support. Invite the group to thank God for his grace and to confess their sins to God this week.