

Crossville Church of Christ

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COMPASS

Using God's Word to Chart The Course
Of A Congregation

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Kyle Fairman
Dale Hennessee
Mike Isaacson
David Kerley
Doug Loveday
Greg Maxwell
Don Napier
Tom Parham
Mark Roberts
Roger Smith
Jason Wyatt
Jerry Wood

Ministers:

Barry Kennedy
Ken Mears

Missionaries: (India)

Don Iverson
Jim Waldron

Service Times

Sunday Bible Study	9 AM
Sunday Worship	10 AM
	6 PM
Wednesday	6 PM

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Ladies Bible Class	
Tuesdays	11AM
Prayer Meeting	
Tuesdays	10 AM
Joyful Generation (Youth Devotional & fellowship)	
1st Sunday	7:00 PM

January 24, 2015

JUSTIFIED

means

"just-as-if-I'd"
never sinned

*For He has made Him who knew no sin to
become sin for us, that we might be
made the righteousness of God in Him.
2 Corinthians 5:21*

FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT JUSTIFICATION

Roger D. Campbell

In Acts 13 it is recorded that in the midst of their first recorded preaching journey, Barnabas and Paul went to the city of Antioch of Pisidia, where Paul was given an invitation to speak in the Jewish synagogue on a Sabbath day. After reminding his Jewish listeners of some aspects of Old Testament history, Paul pointed them to Jesus as the resurrected Savior (Acts 13:23-37). Paul then went on to say, "(38) Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: (39) And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

What does it mean to be "justified?" Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament states that the original word for "justified" means "to declare guiltless one accused or who may be accused, acquit of a charge or reproach . . . to be declared innocent and therefore to be absolved from the charge of sins" [p. 150, word no. 1344]. A person that has been justified is one that, despite his past sins, is counted by God as if he had never sinned, that is, the Lord no longer holds such sins against him. Let us now observe four significant truths about justification which Paul declared in his sermon and are written in Acts 13:39.

1. Those that are justified are justified through Jesus. In our text we read that Paul declared that it is "by him" (Jesus) that believers are justified. In similar language, the very preceding verse shows that "the forgiveness of sins" is through the Christ. A few statements from the Book of Romans help us comprehend what is involved on the Lord's part in the justification process. First, anyone that is justified in God's sight is "justified freely by his grace" (Romans 3:24). Second, Romans 3:26 makes it plain that God the Father is the One who does the justifying, calling Him "the justifier." Third, sinners are justified by Jesus' blood (5:8,9). And fourth, after Jesus was delivered up to die for us, He was then "raised again for our justification" (4:25). Without the Christ, no person can be justified before our Maker. Through Him and Him alone can a sinner be counted as if he had never sinned.

2. Those that are justified before God are believers. According to our text (Acts 13:39), who is justified via the Christ? Answer: "all that believe." All that believe what? Believe in reincarnation? Believe in idols? Does the Bible here indicate that regardless of what or in whom a person believes, that God is promising to justify or save him? Of course not. The context shows that our belief must be in "this man" (13:38), which refers to Jesus. In Bible language, believing in Jesus includes not only believing in Him as God's Son and our Savior, but also believing the message that comes from Him, which message Paul preached in Antioch and the Bible describes as "the word of God" (13:44,46) and "the word of the Lord" (13:48,49).

There is another important question that we must not overlook at this point in our study. Since Acts 13:39 says that through Jesus "all that believe are justified," would that word "all" not prove that every believer in the Christ is saved? Would this not be evidence that having faith in God's Son is the only thing that a lost person must do in order to be justified? If God's Book says that "all that believe" are justified, then how can we argue with that? From the cases of conversion about which we read in other segments of the Book of Acts, we learn that: The believers that are justified are those that repent (Acts 2:38). The believers that are justified are those that confess their faith in Jesus (Acts 8:37). The believers that are justified are those that are baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38).

The plain teaching of the New Testament is that Jesus provides salvation to "all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). Now let us put the spotlight on a couple of Bible declarations that we have quoted: Jesus justifies/saves "all that believe" (Acts 13:39). Jesus justifies/saves "all them that obey">

Him (Hebrews 5:9). [emphasis in both verses mine, rdc]

As you see, one of these statements says that those who "believe" are justified/ saved, but the other says that it is those that "obey" who are justified/saved. Which of these two statements is right? Answer: They are both correct! No one can be saved without believing in Jesus, and no one can be saved without obeying the Master's will. Therefore, we know that when we read that those who "believe" are justified (Acts 13:39), that word "believe" must have reference to an obedient faith and not simply to a persuasion of the heart. The truth is, a person is justified by works (obedience to God's instructions) and not by faith only. The Bible says so – James 2:24.

3. Those whom the Lord justifies are justified not partially, but totally. Look once more at the wording of our text: "justified from all things" [emphasis mine, rdc]. In God's sight, a person is either justified, or he is not. There is no such thing as partial justification. The great news is that when the blood of Jesus washes away sins or justifies a person, every sin of that person is forgiven and forgotten (Hebrews 8:12). Lest someone think that we are putting too much stress on the idea of every single sin being remitted, it would be good to recall the words of 1 John 1. There we read that when Christians walk in the light and confess their sins, the blood of Jesus does something. It cleanses them "from all sin" or "from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7,9; emphasis mine, rdc). Friends, to be justified by Jesus from all things/all past transgressions – that is the Bible's teaching. We are simply repeating it. That brings us to one final truth.

4. The justification that Jesus provides was not, and is not, available under the Law of Moses. That was an important fact for Paul's listeners in that first-century Jewish synagogue, and it is a truth that all people of our day need to recognize as well. Paul directly said there were things from which people "could not be justified by the law of Moses" (13:39). The Holy Spirit also guided him to write, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . ." (Galatians 2:16). Not only is justification impossible via the old law, but one who attempts to follow that law for justification is not in good standing with the Lord. The Bible declares that in the first century, any Christians that tried to be justified by Moses' law had "fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). Let us take heed to such a strong message.

Because all have sinned (Romans 3:23), all stand in need of the Lord's justification. We praise Him for the gospel, His system of making man just or righteous (Romans 1:16,17). We thank Him daily for His willingness to justify those that believe and obey Jesus. What a privilege it would have been to have been able to hear Paul "preach it" in that Jewish gathering in Antioch. Yet, how blessed we are to have his sermon recorded in Acts 13 for our instruction.

One final time, here are the four truths about justification that we have learned from Acts 13:39: (1) Those that are justified are justified through Jesus. (2) Those that are justified before God are believers. (3) Those whom the Lord justifies are not partially justified, but totally. (4) The justification that Jesus provides was not, and is not, available under the Law of Moses. We marvel at God's mercy and bountiful provisions for unworthy people like us. To Him be the glory.

Justified

Our sins, oh how great, they leave us all alone.
 Our way is not within us, we cannot find it on our own.
 But God in all His glory, wants all to be just fine,
 He sent His Son from Heaven so we all can be justified.
 So will you follow God's word and be loosed from Satan's chain?
 Be obedient to His gospel and be justified today

— Barry Kennedy