

# JUSTIFICATION

*“Guilty as charged but free to walk!”*

➤ **Romans 5:1** (niv)

What does it mean to be *“justified?”*

*‘To be made right. To be declared free of blame. To be freed of the guilt and the penalty attached to a crime.’*

*“Justification”* is a legal term and it is used in the New Testament to explain the salvation God has given us in Christ.

## ... Justification is an act of acquittal

When Paul uses the word *“justified”* he thinks of our salvation as an *‘act of acquittal’* as in a court of law.

Acquittal means to be *‘exonerated, released or freed.’*

Our acquittal is given to us as a result of Jesus’ finish work on the cross and we receive our acquittal by our response to Jesus through faith.

➤ **Romans 1:17** (nlt)  
**Romans 3:28** (nkjv)  
**Romans 5:1** (nkjv)  
**Galatians 2:16** (niv)

See also **Galatians 3:11; 3:24**

A *“justified”* person is one who has stood in the dock for sentencing, but has been pronounced innocent, then being released from the charges against him.

## To be acquitted requires only legal innocence

God knows (*and we know*) we are guilty of offending heaven's law through our sin and God makes no attempt to change the status of our wrongdoing.

Instead, God has found a way to declare us legally innocent in Christ. God justifies us (*makes us right*) in Christ because of His death at Calvary.

We are innocent of all charges, and free of all penalties on the basis of the transfer of our guilt onto Jesus and His innocence onto us.

To justify a person means to; *'set him again in a right relationship either to the law or to another person.'* For us, this means the law of God and God Himself.

Our justification does not depend upon any internal change in us.

It is a legal matter, based on the acquittal God has secured for us in Christ.

## **Our Justification is a heavenly verdict**

The entire transaction of being justified is heavenly and not earthly. It is based solely upon the merits of Jesus and His substitutionary death.

The Cross is fixed in history, and cannot be changed. Our justifying sentence is recorded in heaven. Therefore, in Christ we are acquitted and made innocent.

We are left with a choice either to believe or to reject the verdict God has spoken in heaven – and upon that simple choice our eternal destiny hangs.

## **... Three benefits of our justification**

### **1. A Full Pardon**

Our Pardon solely rests on the merits of Jesus and His substitutionary death.

➤ **Galatians 1:4** (niv)

Based on the innocence of Jesus, God is then able to acquit us, because Jesus has given to us the full measure of His own righteousness.

This gift is available only to those who first acknowledge their guilt, and then flee to Jesus for refuge.

➤ **1 John 1:9** (niv) *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Based on the fact we have pleaded guilty and have repented heaven's verdict of *"justification"* responds to our plea with a full pardon.

Pardon means *'the remission of punishment due to us and being fully released of any penalty owing to us because of our sin.'*

It has to do, not with the removing of sin itself, but with the removing of the penalty associated with the sin.

Because of our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, even though we are actually guilty, God treats us as though we are innocent.

God's incredible grace and mercy is expressed to us in the following:

- **Micah 7:18-19** (nlt)  
**Isaiah 55:7** (nlt)

See also **Psalm 78:38; 85:2-3; 2 Samuel 12:13; Romans 4:5**

Clearly then, our justification rests on no personal merit, but wholly results from the free act of God's love and grace shown towards us.

God considers us guiltless, and brings us into the fullness of His grace.

## 2. Complete Forgiveness

*"Forgiveness" is more personal than a "pardon".*

**C.S. Lewis** said *"We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it."*

God, however, has not only pardoned us, but has also turned aside His anger by forgiving us of our offences! He bears no ill will toward us.

- **Psalms 85:2-3** (gw) *You removed your people's guilt. You pardoned all their sins. You laid aside all your fury. You turned away from your burning anger.*
- **Ephesians 1:7** (gw) *Through the blood of His Son, we are set free from our sins. God forgives our failures because of His overflowing kindness.*

## 3. Enjoy Inner Peace

If we truly embrace the fact that we have been justified by faith in Christ, we will experience an immediate release from the guilt of our sinful conscience.

- **Romans 5:1** (nlt)

Therefore, it is futile to remain under a guilty oppression for crimes of sin which we are no longer considered guilty – see **Acts 13:38-39** (nlt)

## ... Conclusion

Justification must also include our reconciliation back with God. If not, we might find ourselves in the unhappy position of being only released criminals.

Therefore God, when He justifies us, He also reconciles us to Himself.

If God reckons us to be innocent of all sin, then He will naturally treat us as someone innocent of all sin.

So then, if we are justified, we may also accept that we are reconciled: that is, mutual trust and confidence are restored between us and God.

## ... Application

The rule of “*double jeopardy*” applies in our justification.

Meaning, a person cannot be tried a second time for an offence of which they have been acquitted at a previous trial.

Does this mean then that we are now unable to sin? Sadly no!

The reality is that we will sin - but as we apply and live by **1 John 1:9** (niv)

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

We will continue to experience the benefits of our justified state in Christ being;

- ... Fully pardoned
- ... Completely forgiven
- ... Enjoying inner peace