

I. Justification

Luke 18:9–14 “He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee was standing and praying like this about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I’m not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.’ “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this one went down to his house justified rather than the other, because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.””

A. The Reformation debate

4 key questions:

1. Is justification purely legal or does it involve both legal and transformative aspects?
 2. Is the declaration pronounced only on the basis of Christ’s righteousness or pronounced on the basis of those who have co-operated with grace and produced righteousness?
 3. In the act of justification is faith resting in and receiving Christ alone or is faith merely assent to the teaching of the church?
 4. Can someone know with assurance that he or she is justified now, or is this the sin of presumption?
- John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, “We explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favour as righteous. And we say it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness”
 - “If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone... let him be anathema.” Canon 9 of the Council of Trent (1545-63).
 - “Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

B. Justification in Scripture

Declarative (judicial) meaning

- Justification is legal because it is the opposite of condemnation
 - Romans 8:33–34 “Who can bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.”

The righteousness of God

- Righteousness of God can mean God’s moral character
 - Ephesians 4:24 “and to put on the new self, the one created according to God’s likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.”
- It is also something which is given
 - Romans 3:22–24 “The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Imputed righteousness

- Christians once shared in Adam’s guilt as he was our old covenant head (Rom 5:12) and now we share in Christ’s righteousness as he is our new covenant head
 - Romans 4:5–6 “But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness. Likewise, David also speaks of the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:”
 - Isaiah 53:11 “After his anguish, he will see light and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will carry their

iniquities.”

- Jesus is...
 - Jeremiah 23:5–6 ““Look, the days are coming”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“when I will raise up a Righteous Branch for David. He will reign wisely as king and administer justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. This is the name he will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.”

II. Adoption

Adoption is not

- a goal
- imitation of Christ
- only legal
- only relational

Adoptions involves

- new name and identity
 - Galatians 3:27–28 “For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- new family and relationships
 - Matthew 12:48–50 “He replied to the one who was speaking to him, “Who is my mother and who are my brothers?” Stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.””
 - Galatians 4:6 “And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!””
- new future and inheritance
 - Hebrews 1:2 “In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.”
 - Romans 8:17 “and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ

- 1 Peter 1:4 "and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."
- We inherit our Father's estate along with our brother: Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth."

Adoption means

- we continue to clothe ourselves with Christ each day
 - Ephesians 4:20–25 "But that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth. Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another." ...