

An Alien Righteousness

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] The very heartbeat of justification by faith is that we experience an alien righteousness.

! It is by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus that we are justified. Listen all the way back to the words of the prophet Jeremiah, written hundreds of years before Christ came to earth in the incarnation.

In his day, Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely. And this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.

The Lord our righteousness resonates. In fact, Jeremiah repeats that several times in the book that bears his name.

Anyone who stands before the Lord in judgment that is not cloaked in the righteousness of Christ the Lord will not stand for very long.

[1 : 20] They'll end up in that place we saw. Another thing I couldn't help but think about that.

When that guy's been there, 10 million millennia as we measure time, and there is no time in eternity, he will not have reduced by one second the amount of time he needs to stay there.

Those not cloaked in Christ's righteousness will tumble into the abyss of eternal punishment for his rejection of God's one provision for eternal life.

Romans 10.3, for being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

This was the problem with those caught in that most frightening passage in Matthew that we've read before. Chapter 7, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to him, I never knew you.

[2 : 39] Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Do you see in that passage their utter contempt for justification by faith through the righteousness of Christ?

On what basis did these people expect entry into the kingdom of heaven? Well, let me read the three key phrases there.

We prophesied, that's preach. We preached in your name. We cast out demons in your name. We did mighty works in your name.

And notice that use of that word we. That goes by a name, by the way. It's called works theology. If I do enough, God has to let me into heaven.

If you do enough, God will let you into heaven. And the interesting thing about it is, for people that really believe in that, and I've met people that do, they can never do enough to be comfortable.

[3 : 51] I have a name for it, do-do religion is what I call it. It's a do-do religion. But you can never do enough. The men and the people in Matthew 7 were depending upon their righteous works instead of Christ's righteousness.

And by the way, in my notes here, I have righteous works in quotation marks. As a means of achieving heaven, these works were as far from God as they could get.

Now, the Apostle Paul understood this attitude. This is how he describes himself in the third chapter of Philippians. If anyone else thinks he has reasons for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

That's Paul. And then Paul, on the road to Damascus, met the Savior, met the Lord Jesus. And look at the change. Philippians chapter 3.

[5 : 16] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, that's dung, manure, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from keeping the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Luther really launched the Reformation when he realized that the righteousness was not inside him. It came from God through Christ. The righteousness of our justification is a God righteousness. It is possible for us to engage in righteous works that we are directed to do by the grace of God. We should do them. But God-directed righteousness is not the righteousness in view here.

[6 : 45] This is an alien righteousness, meaning that it originated outside of us and is applied to our account by the mercy and grace of the Trinity.

The righteousness of justification is the righteousness and obedience of Christ. We've read this before in Romans 5. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Outside us, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification in life for all men.

For as by the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous. The justification spoken of here is pointed away from ourselves and pointed to the Lord Jesus.

It is his accomplishment in his finished work that is in view here. And that is why we can say the righteousness of justification is the righteousness of God and not we ourselves.

[8 : 05] It is the righteousness of Christ found in his obedience of death on the cross. In this righteousness, we have all the righteousness we need to deal with our sinful and sin-cursed situation.

It is a righteousness that is undefiled, it's undefilable, that never knew sin, never even had a thought sin.

Grace reigns through this righteousness unto eternal life in Christ Jesus. Listen to what the psalmist said. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.

They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name they shall rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness they shall be exalted.

That's Psalm 89. In whose righteousness shall we be exalted someday? In God's righteousness. Justification proceeds from God's free grace.

[9 : 20] It is an act of God and God alone. It is based totally upon the righteousness of God. Now having said that repeatedly in one form or another throughout this portion of our study, we still must do something that is vitally important.

We must believe. We have to believe. We must exercise faith in the God as He's revealed Himself to us in the three persons of the Trinity.

We put our faith and trust in Christ and in His work on the cross. And I'll do a little bit more toward the end on that very point. But we cannot be like the man who announced to his church that he was fairly certain he was one of the elect of God.

And that being true, he was going to go outside his house every day and sit on a sump to see how and when God was going to save him. That man died and ended up in hell. He asked the Lord, why am I here?

And the Lord told him very clearly, you didn't believe. You didn't believe. We have to believe. We must entrust ourselves to Christ.

[10 : 39] Believe in Greek language, pistou means commit your life to something. Christ in this case. Trust. We must also remember that faith alone justifies, but it is not a faith that is alone.

It's never a faith that is alone. A faith alone would be a monstrosity. That faith does not exist in the kingdom of God.

Saving faith works itself out through love. You can read about that in Galatians 5, 6. Faith without works is a dead faith.

And a dead faith is an unsaving faith. As one man has said, a lot of people have demon faith. James says, the devils believe and tremble.

Even the devils believe not unto salvation, but they know and they tremble. Read the entire book of James. It's only five chapters, I think.

[11 : 52] But we don't work to be saved. Now some say, well, Paul and James were in conflict. No, they weren't. Paul says, you're saved by grace and not by works. James said, you're saved by grace and works will follow as naturally as a ship goes into harbor.

Once you're saved by unmerited favor. So they complement each other. What James is saying is it's a living faith that justifies and a living faith that has united us to Christ.

When we entrust ourselves to Christ, He delivers us from the penalty of sin. Think about that. You're no longer under condemnation.

Romans 8.1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. delivered from the penalty of sin. And He begins a work immediately to deliver us from the power of sin.

That's what this life's about. We're going to eventually, in a few weeks, actually, get to sanctification, being recreated in the image of Christ. That's being delivered from the power of sin, the sanctification process.

[13 : 12] And we'll spend more than one or two weeks there. And this all will culminate in glory, and we will talk about glorification as our last topic in May.

But it culminates in glory where we will be delivered from the very presence of sin. We've already missed the penalty if we're true to the faith.

we're working on getting away from the power and eventually from the very presence of sin. You know, I heard MacArthur say this. He said, I'm going to be interested in gold streets and giant pearls and all these jewels for about 10 minutes.

And after that, I will have no interest in that stuff. But my interest for eternity is going to be dwelling in a place where there is no sin.

Can you imagine that? No sin at all. Amazing. But we are to fight in this life the power and presence of sin.

[14 : 21] Romans 6. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. I understand that's strong in the Greek language. How can we who died to sin still live in it?

Well, we're about to close our study of justification by faith. It has been a part of a larger study we've been engaged in now for a year and a half to this point called Salvation God's Way.

when we leave justification we're going to go from there to look at adoption sanctification perseverance and glorification and then summer break.

We should be finishing our study on Salvation God's Way in May just before we take off for the summer. and then we will God willing initiate a new study next fall.

But let me say this about justification by faith. You can never really get away from it. It's everything. It's everything. So I'll be making references to it especially sanctification because they're intertwined.

[15 : 43] so you'll hear the word again before we're before we're through. But as we close out our good friend justification by faith alone in Christ alone I want to leave you with some points to reflect on and these are in no particular order of importance I think they're all important and as they came to me I typed them out and so I didn't have a rhythm in there you know we'll start here and we'll end up here and it's an acrostic or whatever they call those things.

Justification by faith alone is a one time event in God's plan of salvation. It's like being born again or born from above anathen in Greek.

Once you're born again it's not repeated. justification is never repeated. It happens one time. It happens one time. So if you think you're not been justified by faith give Mike a call.

The church and this is Luther the church rises or falls depending on their view and teaching of this great doctrine. The church rises or falls based on justification by faith.

many churches and many denominations in our country and all over the world have abandoned the doctrine of justification and God has removed their lampstand.

[17 : 25] You read about that in Revelation of course. They have become meaningless as it pertains to the kingdom. Important point on justification.

God is not moved by anything outside of himself in our justification. He didn't look at us on the inside and say I got to justify that guy.

Boy it'd be ashamed if he wasn't justified. He doesn't do it that way. There is nothing outside of God that has caused our justification.

It's all of God. Why does God justify a sinner by the righteousness of Christ alone?

And the best answer we can come up with is because it was his good pleasure to do so. And when you think about the fact that it cost his son his life, boy, I mean, I'm sorry guys, I would have said let's start over.

[18:36] We won't do Adam and Eve this time. We'll do, pick a name, you know, Bert and Evelyn. but we're not, you know, let's just, no one would know if they started over.

They didn't do that. His good pleasure led to the justification of sinners. Grace in the stream flows from grace in the fountain.

The fountain is Christ. It's flowing outward. Adam had a fountain after Genesis 3. Everything that flowed out of there tainted every human that ever lived except for Jesus.

And he was human. 100% human, 100% God. Everything that has flowed from that fountainhead is polluted with sin. Everything.

But there's another stream that flows from the grace in the fountain. It's a fountain of grace. Our justification flows from there.

[19:45] Our adoption flows from there. Our calling, glory, all flow from the goodwill and pleasure of the Lord.

Justification is reckoned to us as favor and not out of debt. God doesn't know us anything. I had when I was in the FBI I actually used to work out if you can believe that.

Sitting over in the sauna at the Y with the Episcopal priest. Everyone called him father but me. And I knew he was but he knew I was.

He didn't know I was a believer. And I said you're a preacher right? And he said well yeah. I said I got a question for you. I said how do I go to heaven?

He said just tell God he has to send you because he has to be merciful. He doesn't have any choice. That was his response. Justification is reckoned to us as favor and not out of debt.

[20:49] And that's why it's called a free gift. If it's not a free gift then it's not favor it's debt. I got to save them. I owe it to him. Oh man.

Listen to that prayer he's praying. I've got to save this guy. No that's debt. And salvation is never out of a sense of debt. While justification is based upon the free gift of God always remember it's based upon the ransom of Christ.

You know it's free to us but look at what happened what it cost Jesus. grace. As one has said grace is free but it ain't cheap.

It's not cheap grace. It's free grace. The Puritan said this and I've got a book in my library with this title. In my place condemned he stood.

He stood in my place. He stood in your place. We are made righteous by the obedience of Christ even the obedience of the cross.

[22:02] He told his disciples he was going to the cross for three years. They couldn't figure it out. And of course foot in mouth Peter said I'm going to let that happen. He got a strong rebuke didn't he?

Get behind me Satan. In the justification of a sinner the justice of God is fully satisfied and the wrath of God is fully propitiated meaning appeased.

God justice his just demands are met and God's wrath is appeased.

And you know in the throne room you've got the father and the son and they say Satan's there as the accuser and I read one guy he said you know Satan accuses us day and night and you know what he's probably not lying not when it comes to me he didn't have to and the father turns to the son the son says he's one of mine and the father says I'm satisfied.

His sin is appeased propitiated satisfied I'm satisfied. What does the sinner contribute to his justification? Nothing but receiving it which the Bible calls faith and I told you I'd come back to that but listen to this and even our faith is a grace gift of God even our faith Ephesians 2 8 and 9 you ought to memorize that but memorize 10 with it Ephesians 2 8 9 and 10 we are justified apart from any meritorious works we are called to a life of good works not as a means of justification but as a result of justification and that's Ephesians 2 10 grace and works cannot commingle any more than

can iron and clay and you know the great example that was the statue
[24 : 27] Nebuchadnezzar and it was made out of part iron and part clay and it couldn't stand it
wouldn't even stand up to a strong wind in Oklahoma grace and works cannot commingle any more
than can iron and clay and as we part with our good friend the just shall live by faith Thank you.