

## JUSTIFICATION 3 – LEARNING FROM CHURCH HISTORY

### DISCUSS WHILE WAITING TO BEGIN...

When is it OK to disagree with other Christian traditions or churches? When is it not OK? What principles and Bible texts should guide us in working it out?

### 1. RECAP...

- Justification is a legal declaration that we are right with God
- God justifies the godly, imputing the righteousness of Christ to those in union with Him
- We do not merit Christ's righteousness – but receive it by faith
- Our works are solely evidential – they show that we are justified, but do not earn that righteousness

### 2. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND REFORMATION CONFLICT

#### (a) the five “solas” of the Reformation:

scripture,  
faith,  
grace,  
Christ,  
God's glory  
... ALONE

#### (b) Does this really matter any more?

### 3. WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

#### (a) Justification is NOT something that God does IN us

“Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what a judge does – he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status. If we are innocent he declares accordingly.”

*John Murray, Redemption accomplished and applied, p121*

Regeneration	Saving righteousness	Personal righteousness / growing holiness / progressive sanctification
By God's grace In us	By God's grace NOT in us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By God's grace</li> <li>• In us</li> </ul>

#### (b) Roman Catholicism confuses justification and regeneration

##### • Justification at the Council of Trent (1545-1547)

Christ obeys →	We are given Christ's righteousness at Baptism – BUT this does <u>not</u> justify →	Because of Christ's work we receive the Spirit →	By the Spirit we do good works – & THESE WORKS JUSTIFY US
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##### • So what?

- justification goes up and down
- assurance is impossible (and is condemned)
- the Church and the human Priest are exalted as channels of grace
- salvation is by works: Christ earns us grace so that we can produce good works and work our way to heaven
- infused righteousness, not imputed righteousness
- justifying righteousness is not in Christ but in us

“If justification is confused with regeneration or sanctification, then the door is opened for the perversion of the gospel at its centre. Justification is still the article of the standing or falling Church” *John Murray, Redemption Accomplished and Applied, p121*

#### **4. JUSTIFICATION IN REFORMATION CREEDS AND CATECHISMS**

##### **(a) From the 39 Articles of Religion**

###### **Article 11 The justification of man (modernised English)**

We are accounted righteous before God solely on account of the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through faith and not on account of our own good works or of what we deserve. Consequently the teaching that we are justified by faith alone is a most wholesome and comforting doctrine. This is taught more fully in the homily on Justification.

###### **Article 12 Good works (modernised English)**

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow on after justification, can never atone for our sins or face the strict justice of God's judgment, they are nevertheless pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ and necessarily spring from a true and living faith. Thus a living faith is as plainly known by its good works as a tree is known by its fruit.

##### **(b) From the Westminster Confession of Faith – Chapter XI – Of Justification**

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

4. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.

5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and, although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

6. The justification of believers under the old testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the new testament.