

9. Justification, adoption, and sanctification

WCF chapters 11-13 *Modern Language version – 1993 – OPC*

11.1. Those whom God effectually calls he also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting and accepting them as righteous. It is not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone that they are justified. It is not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other act of Christian obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ to them who receive and rest on him and his righteousness by faith. Men do not have this faith of themselves; it is the gift of God.

2. Faith—receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness—is the only instrument of justification; yet it is not the only grace in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all other saving graces. Justifying faith is not dead, but works by love.

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. He made a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, because he was freely given by the Father for them, and because his obedience and satisfaction were freely accepted in their stead, and not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace. It was God's purpose in the justification of sinners to glorify both his exact justice and his rich grace.

4. God, from all eternity, decreed to justify all the elect. In the fullness of time, Christ died for their sins and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not justified until, in due time, the Holy Spirit actually applies Christ to them.

5. God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified. 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 to them until they humble themselves, confess their sin, plead for 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.

Justification: Key texts – Romans 3:22-28, 2 Cor 5:19-21

What is justification?

= Justification / Justified / Righteousness
NOT infused r'ness – God justifies the ungodly, Rom. 4:5
BUT (i) forgiveness – Romans 4:6-8, 2 Cor. 5:19
AND (ii) imputed/clothed with Christ's righteousness

The basis of justification?

Not anything in us or by us... but because of Christ...
Not that our faith or obedience stands as r'ness in place of our works...
Only by/because/through Christ... and even saving faith is a gift! - Eph. 2:7-8

Justification is received by faith

Alone! Resting on what Jesus has done.
But it's never alone: e.g. Spirit-given faith, patience, hope, love etc. - James 2:17,22,26

Christ's obedience and death: rejoice!!!

Dealt with God's justice... on behalf of the justified...
who are saved by Him... and thus by free grace alone
– Rom. 5:8-10, 19

Justification: timing... and in personal experience

Determined in eternity – Rom. 8:30
Achieved in history at the Cross – Rom. 4:25
Personally applied only at conversion – Titus 3:4-7

The justified person: secure... yet a sinner

Can never fall – John 10:28, Heb. 10:14
Discipline – e.g. Psalm 51:7-12, 32:5

Old and New Testaments: only one way to be justified

E.g. Abraham – Romans 4:22-24, Gal. 3:9, 13-14

12.1. All those who are justified God graciously guarantees to make partakers of the grace of adoption in and for his only Son, Jesus Christ. By this act they are taken into the number of God's children and enjoy the liberties and privileges of that relationship; they are given his name; they receive the Spirit of adoption; they have access to the throne of grace with boldness; and they are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father." Like a father, God has compassion on, protects, provides for, and chastens them; yet, they will never be cast off, but are sealed to the day of redemption, and will inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

13.1. Those who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified—truly and personally—through the power of Christ's death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them. The dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, its various lusts are more and more weakened and put to death, and those called and regenerated are more and more enlivened and strengthened in all saving graces, leading to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

2. This sanctification, although imperfect in this life, is effected in every part of man's nature. Some remnants of corruption still persist in every part, and so there arises a continual and irreconcilable war—the flesh warring against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

3. Although in this war the remaining corruption may strongly prevail for a time, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate nature overcomes, and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Adoption

Salvation = a package: justified... and adopted

Justification the bedrock... adoption the highest privilege and joy

Adoption: privileges... access with boldness... "Abba"
– John 1:12, Romans 8:17, Galatians 4:4-5

... and discipline – Hebrews 12:6

... never cast off, but "sealed" for eternity – Eph. 4:30

The Christians most basic orientation: toward our Father in heaven... and next towards all His other children

Sanctification

Sanctified / set apart for God / made holy – 1 Cor 6:11

His work: NOT that justification is credited to God and sanctification to us.

Through Christ – Romans 6:5-6

By His Word and Spirit – 2 Thess. 2:13, John 17:17
God's Word transforms and matures us – without it we remain children

Leading to growing holiness: fighting sin... strengthened by God – Eph. 3:16-19, Heb. 12:14

The experience of sanctification?

In every part of us: heart, mind, will, bodies, words...

Imperfect/incomplete in this life... remaining corruption
– 1 John 1:10, Romans 7:18-23, Phil. 3:12

Thus, a constant holy war – Gal 5:17

... AND God's help to growth in grace

So PRAY, FIGHT, and HELP ONE ANOTHER

Personal response: for what should we give thanks... confess... pray?