

15. Learning Why Justification Is Necessary

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the results of justification. We saw that justification is what makes it possible for people to have peace with God. We saw that peace makes it possible for us to come boldly to the Father because we are able to come to the Father through Christ. In this topic, we will see that we want to help our children understand why justification is necessary.

In Romans 5:12-14, we read, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.” When God created Adam, God gave Adam freedom to do everything except one thing. Genesis 2:16-17 says, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” God explained both the sin and the consequence of that sin.

God said that Adam would die the very day that he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Although Adam did not die physically for 930 years, Adam and Eve did die spiritually the day that they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, Genesis 3:7-8 says, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul and the spirit. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover themselves. Then, they tried to hide from God because they had separated themselves from God by sin.

Here, we see that spiritual (and physical) death spread to all men. The fact that Adam had a sin nature meant that all of his descendants were born with a sin nature that separated them from God. As a result, death spread to all people because all have sinned. Here, we see the great impact of the sin of Adam. It affected all of the people that would live on the earth. This was true even before the law was given to Moses. Until the law was given, people did not have a list of specific sins. However, all people experienced death because they all had a sin nature. That was true even though they could not commit the same sin that Adam committed. The sin that Adam committed was to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since Adam was removed from the Garden of Eden, no other person could commit that particular sin. However, death was passed on to all people because the descendants of Adam all had a sin nature. Adam was a type of Christ because his action affected many people just as the free gift of Christ would affect many people but in a very different way.

That was why it was necessary for a second person to come that did not have a sin nature. Romans

5:15-17 says, “But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)” The free gift that Christ brought is not like the judgment that Adam brought by his sin. The judgment that Adam brought was death.

In contrast to the judgment that Adam brought, the grace of God and the gift provided by that grace came through one Man, Jesus Christ. We see that the free gift that came through grace came to reverse the effects of the sin of Adam. Adam committed just one sin and that sin brought condemnation on the whole human race and separated man from God. As a result, justification was necessary because of the offenses of many people. In contrast, the free gift that Christ brought was justification. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The separation from God that was brought by the sin of Adam is replaced by the peace with God that is received by all who receive justification by faith.

Adam committed one sin and that sin brought death to all people. In contrast, we see that all those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Christ. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The gift that Christ offers is eternal life. Christ said in John 5:24, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” Here, we see that Christ promised that His gift does three things for all those who believe in Him. We receive eternal life. We no longer face judgment. We have been passed from death into life.

As a result, Romans 5:18-21 says, “Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In these verses, we see some additional contrasts between what Adam did and what Christ did.

The sin of Adam brought judgment on all people. This judgment meant that all people were condemned. Romans 3:19-20 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” Here, we see that the entire world stands guilty before God because of the sin that entered the world through Adam. The previous verses in that chapter show that there is not a righteous human on the earth.

In contrast to the sin of Adam, we read that Christ committed a righteous act. That righteous act is what makes possible the free gift. That righteous act is described in 1 Peter 2:24 where we read, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.” Here, we see that the righteous act of Christ was to have our sins placed on Him as He hung on the cross. As a result, we are no longer slaves to sin. Instead, we are able to live for righteousness as we yield to the Holy Spirit so that we are living in His strength and not our own human strength. Christ took our payment so that we could be healed and set free from the control of sin. That is why we stand before God in the righteousness of Christ.

We also see that the law entered so that sin might abound. Romans 7:8 says, “But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.” Here, we see that the law helps people to know how to show their rebellion. When people are given a law that tells them that they are not to commit certain acts because they are sin, that law causes many people to have a desire to do those very things. As a result, the law stirs up the sinful desires of the flesh.

However, we see that when sin increases, grace also increases. Here, we see that the sinful heart of mankind produces more opportunities for God to show His grace to those who are living in sin and rebellion. At the very time that Saul (Paul) was arresting and imprisoning Christians, God chose to show His grace to Saul. Later, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.” Paul certainly knew in his own life that God had shown His grace to him in abundance.

The sin of Adam caused death to rule in the lives of people. In fact, the fear of death keeps all people in bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Here, we see the consequences of the sin of Adam.

In contrast, the grace of God makes it possible for all those who place their faith in Christ to have the righteousness of Christ placed on them. Philippians 3:9 says, “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.” In this verse, Paul made it clear that it was not his own righteousness but the righteousness of God that was at work in his life. That righteousness was given by grace. We want to help our children understand that Christ has shown his grace to each of us. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in their understanding of the grace of God.