

GOD'S GLORIOUS SALVATION

1 Peter 1:10-12

Introduction:

Turn with me to 1 Peter again. We are still not getting past this first section of this letter of Peter to the suffering believers scattered throughout Asia Minor - *Read 1 Peter 1:10-12.*

A couple of weeks ago, I briefly mentioned these three verses, but I would like to pick them up again this morning. Last week, when I took a couple of days to get away for some personal study and prayer, I read a book related to the calling and ministry of a pastor and some of the dangers involved. In that book he mentioned the importance of being constantly awed by the magnitude of what God has done and is doing in our lives, particularly in our salvation.

As I thought about that, I was led back to these verses in 1 Peter. The prophets themselves, who wrote about the grace that was to come, did not fully understand what it was they were predicting. That's because it was a mystery – a truth that was hidden until the time that it was to be revealed. But at the time that the prophets spoke, they did not fully grasp what it was that they spoke about.

When Isaiah said of the Messiah, *"He was wounded for our transgressions..."* (Is. 53:5) Peter says, he couldn't really understand what that message meant. It was hidden from them, kept until it was revealed to the apostles through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Peter goes on to say that even the angels were not privy to the truth of the gospel and the mystery of salvation. He says that these are *"...things into which angels long to look."*

Paul talks about this from another perspective in Ephesians 3 – the mystery of the gospel revealed through the church – *turn and read Eph. 3:7-13.* It is in the church that God has chosen to reveal to the heavenly beings the wonder of salvation and the marvellous plan He had from ages past.

In the passage that we read earlier from Ephesians, you may have noticed the abundance of terms that Paul uses in reference to our salvation—adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, inheritance. Thinking about all of this, I thought that it would be worth our time to investigate some of the deeper things of the salvation that God has provided for us.

What I would like to do over the coming months, on the Sundays when we have communion, is to look into some of the various elements of our salvation. I don't think we really have a grasp of all that happens when we come to put our faith in Jesus Christ. There are four specific truths that I want to examine:

- Justified—A new Standing
- Sanctified—A new Purpose
- Redeemed—A new Liberty
- Adopted—A new Relationship

Today we begin with justification...

Justified – A New Standing

Defining Justification

In Romans 8:30, Paul says of God that *"...those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he **justified** he also glorified."*

So, what does it mean to be justified? Merriam-Webster dictionary defines justify as: *"to prove or show to be just, right, or reasonable."* In theological terms, one definition I found said, *"To be justified is to be made righteous. It is a divine act where God declares the sinner to be innocent of his sins. It is not that the sinner is now sinless, but that he is 'declared' sinless."*

There is just one exception I would like to make regarding that definition – I don't like the term "innocent." It is not that we are declared innocent, but that the guilt and penalty of our sin, the charges against us have been removed, because the penalty was paid for us. But the bottom line is that justification is a declaration by God that we are no longer guilty of sin, but are seen as righteous.

How is this possible? How are we justified?

The Process of Justification

There are two significant things that happen at salvation, related to justification. The first is forgiveness. The past record of our sin, and the penalty that goes along with it, is forgiven, forever removed, not because we deserve it, or even because God overlooks our sin, but because He paid the penalty for it.

Paul said, in Romans 4:25 that Jesus *"...was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."* He took the weight of our sin on himself, satisfied God's righteous wrath against sin and us, so that we could be forgiven, and all because of his grace and mercy toward us.

*He paid a debt he did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay,
I needed someone to wash my sins away.
And now I sing a brand new song, amazing grace the whole day long,
Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay.*

Imagine you have a line of credit at the bank that is so far in the red that you could never pay it off. Then someone comes along and pays the debt, wiping out the liability, leaving your account clean and balanced. That is what Jesus did on the cross. But there is more. It is not just that he removed the debt.

He also gave you his righteousness in exchange. In 2 Cor. 5:21, Paul says that God *"...made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

Jesus took our sin, our debt on himself, thereby clearing the debt from our account. But then he credited to our account his righteousness, in exchange for that debt.

In speaking of Abraham and his faith in God's promises, Paul says in Romans 4:22-25, *"That is why his faith was 'counted to him as righteousness.' But the words 'it was counted to him' were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."*

The theological term that is used and the word used in some translation is imputed. Our sins are forgiven, our account is cleared, and then Christ's righteousness is imputed or credited to our account.

The Results of Justification

So, what are the results of justification? When we come to faith in Christ, he wipes out our debt of sin and credits his righteousness to our account. How does that affect our life? I just want to mention a couple of things that are both related to our standing before God.

First, peace with God – Romans 5 :1 – *turn and read vv. 1-2, 6-11* – our situation has changed. At one time, we were enemies of God, separated from Him by our sin. But now, having been justified—that is, having our sin removed and replaced by his righteousness—we are reconciled with Him. We are no longer enemies, but have been brought back into a relationship with Him. We have peace with God...

Related to that, freedom from condemnation – Romans 8 begins with the assurance that those who are in Christ are free from condemnation – *read 8:1-4*. Since we have been justified—declared righteous before God—no accusation can be made and held against us.

Our new standing before God means that our sin has been forever dealt with. As we said earlier, our sin with its guilt and penalty has been removed and his righteousness has been credited to our account. The entire 8th chapter of Romans talks about living in the light of that new standing, and it finishes with another assurance that we are now free from condemnation – *read vv. 31-34, discuss*.

Paul then ends this discussion with the assurance of God's unfailing love for his own children—a love that can never be destroyed.

Conclusion

Justification – a new standing; a position of righteousness. A very important question: Have you been justified by God, through the blood of Jesus? Do you know that your sins have been forgiven and replaced by Christ's righteousness? This can only happen by God's grace made effective by your faith in what Jesus has accomplished on the cross.

A second question, for those who have that assurance. Does God's grace amaze you? I want to read one more passage of Scripture in closing. *Read Ephesians 2:1-7*. Does it elicit awe in your mind and heart? Do you wake up in the morning in awe at God's glorious salvation?