

# WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION

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"What is Justification?

It is God regarding sinners as if they had never sinned and granting them righteousness."

Truth and Grace Memory Book (Book 1) pg. 44

## Don't we all want justice?

I didn't deserve to be in the principal's office. I hadn't done anything wrong. I was in trouble because I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. A bunch of guys were throwing spit balls in class and I had been sitting next to them. When the teacher turned around and saw a spit ball flying through the air, I along with a couple of guys around me were sent to the office. I was innocent, yet called guilty. Is there anything worse? Has anything like that ever happened to you? Have you ever been falsely accused of something, but you were really innocent? This has happened to me a couple of times during my life. If it hasn't happened to you yet, just wait, at some point it probably will. None of us like to be accused or punished for something that we didn't do. In fact, if we are punished for something that we didn't do, the one who punished us is acting unjustly. We want to be treated "justly" don't we? Don't we all want justice?

That may be more of a tricky question than you think. Let me ask you a slightly different question. Would you or I want God to give us justice for the sins that we have committed? If God dealt with our sins that we have committed and punished us for them what would the outcome be? We would be in a lot of trouble wouldn't we? God is holy and perfect! So much so that James the brother of Jesus says "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (Jms. 2:10). This means that even if you only sinned once in life, it is just like being guilty of breaking all of God's commands. So what would be the outcome of our sin if we are dealt with justly by God? The answer is "Hell." Hell is a place where sin is punished for eternity. What is eternity? It means forever and ever. Because God is perfect, His very character demands that every sin be paid for. Now, let me ask you that question again. Don't we all want justice? Thankfully, because of God's grace and kindness there is a way for Him to still get the justice that His character demands and for us to not have to go to hell. The cross of Jesus makes all of this possible and that is what justification is all about. "Justification" is a very important term and this booklet will explain to you in further detail just how it works. I recommend for parents to read through just one chapter a night with their kids and talk through the "questions to consider," and "things to remember."

# 1

## Wages and Gifts

### Memory Verse:

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:23

### “Wages:” You earn them!

Have you ever done a job for someone and after completing it you were paid for what you had done? Did it make you feel good to receive the money for the hard work you put in? The payment you received was the wage that you earned for completing the job. Earning something in that way feels good doesn't it? I remember as a kid, mowing lawns all afternoon in the hot sun. When I was finished I would go up to the door of the house I had just finished and they would put that hard-earned money in my hand. That felt the best! Many times, I would go down to the Casey's or 7/11 and buy a slurpee to cool off. Buying that slurpee with my own money felt great.

In the spiritual realm you have also earned a wage for the work of sin. The wage that you have earned for this work is “death.” Doesn't feel quite as good to earn this type wage does it? Don't worry, you are in good company, or should I say bad company? Romans 3:10 says, “there is none who is good, no not one.” Every person to walk the earth has earned death just like you and I. Well, almost every single person. There was one person who never sinned, and because of that good news, you and I have hope! In Matthew's gospel Jesus says “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” (Mt. 5:17) The Law that you and I broke, Jesus “fulfilled” or “kept” perfectly. That of course is good news for Jesus, but you may be wondering how that relates to you and I. Before we get to that answer, we need to talk a little bit about how we got into this sin mess to begin with.

### Is sin my fault, or Adam and Eve's fault?

YES! You might be wondering if our first parents (Adam and Eve) are to blame for this “sin thing” and maybe we aren't actually accountable to God after all. The truth is, that Adam and Eve are guilty, and that you are also guilty of sin. To sin means, “to miss the mark.” Adam, Eve, You, I and everyone we know have missed the mark of God's holy standard found in His Word. There are over six hundred laws mentioned in the Old Testament. Let's just look at the ten most famous ones listed in Exodus 20 and ask ourselves we have ever broken any of these:

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself any carved image
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not lie
10. You shall not covet

Don't feel alone right now. Remember that every single human being is in the same place. Sin is all of our faults. While Adam and Eve were the persons that sin entered the world through, we are not only born with their guilt as human beings, but we sin as soon as we get the chance. Romans 5:12 says, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned..” Notice the last phrase, “because all sinned.” We did it to

ourselves. This sin of course brings “death.” It would be horrible if the verse stopped right there, but it doesn’t. Notice the memory verse above. “For the wages of sin is death, **but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” The bad news is “sin” and “death,” but the good news is the “gift” of “eternal life!”

### **“Gifts:” They’re free!**

The gift of eternal life is not like wage of death you earned. A gift is according to the dictionary, “a thing given willingly to someone without payment; a present.” My favorite time of the year is Christmas time. Every year when we celebrate the birth of Christ, we go to our family’s houses and under the tree there are gifts. Those gifts weren’t things that we worked hard for and received because we earned them, like you might if mowing a lawn. No! They were given to us freely out of love from the person who bought and wrapped them for us. We receive Christmas gifts apart from whether or not our behavior was good or bad. They were gifts! Nothing was expected in return for them. We don’t pay for those presents or do anything to earn them. They are simply “free gifts.” Now think about it, the “gift of God is eternal life in Christ.....” This means that you do not, and can not earn eternal life. It is a gift! It’s free and their for us to grab hold of. The “gift of God” is therefore different than the “wages of sin.” So, what exactly is the free gift that Jesus gives to His children? Remember how we just saw ten of Gods commandments and realized that we were sinners? Jesus not only kept those commands perfectly, but also kept every command that God ever spoke perfectly. This active obedience by Jesus to all of God’s Laws made Him completely righteous before God. This “righteousness” and “obedience” He gives to us freely as a gift who trust Him by faith. This gift He gives doesn’t mean that we ourselves become righteous people. It means that we who trust Jesus are covered by Jesus righteousness. We still remain sinful people, but the perfect and finished work of Christ has been credited to our account. Hebrews 10 says it this way, “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” Jesus sacrifice on the cross in the place of Christians is not a wage that the Christian earns, but instead a gift that God bestows upon them free of charge. It seems strange to receive the gift of forgiveness, a relationship with God and heaven for eternity completely free, yet this is exactly what the scriptures teach. Verse two of the song “In Christ alone says these words,

“In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones He came to save.  
'Til on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied  
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid  
Here in the death of Christ I live.”

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Do you ever feel like you have to earn God’s favor? Do you have to do this?
2. Have you admitted in your heart that you have broken God’s Law?
3. Do you believe that Jesus kept all of God’s Laws perfectly?
4. Can you explain the difference between a wage and a gift?

### **Things to remember:**

1. We are guilty of sin not only because of Adam and Eve, but because of our own sin.
2. Eternal life is a gift from God. It cannot be earned. All you must do is trust in Jesus perfect life in your place, His death that you deserved, His resurrection that proves everything he said is true!

## 2

### Trouble in The Courtroom

#### Memory Verse:

“as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.”

Romans 3:10

Have you ever been to a courtroom? Maybe you have seen one on TV. A courtroom is where a complaint is brought against someone. This complaint is brought by a person called a plaintiff. They bring their case against a person that they claim has done them wrong. The person they are complaining against is trying to defend themselves, so they are known as the defendant. The most important person in the room is the one who gets to make the final decision regarding the complaint. He is called the Judge. He either gets to accuse the defendant of doing wrong and punish him or her, or he believes that the defendant is right and the plaintiff is wrong. In this case, the defendant would be let go. Let me ask you a question..... If all of your past decisions were recorded and played back in front of God on a big screen TV. Would God find out that you were sinful or perfect? I think that we both know the answer to this question. The bible says in Romans that “there is none righteous, not even one.” (Rom. 3:10). If our whole lives were played back on a huge screen from beginning to end in front of by God, we know that we would be embarrassed and found guilty of many sins.

*Let's imagine for a minute what would happen inside a courtroom to us if our sins were taken into account against us.*

#### The Judge: God

Some things to know about the judge. The judge is perfect! Listen to what the scripture says about God. “This God—his way is perfect....” Psalm 18:30a. God is also called Holy. This word means to be “set apart.” It also has the idea of being “different” or “other.” God is perfect in all of His ways and also set apart from the rest of the things that He has created. He made man in his original goodness to be perfect and have fellowship with Him. When the fall of mankind happened with Adam and Eve, humans fell from perfection and out of relationship. Because of our rebellion to the Laws of God we will appear before the judge with all of our sins before Him. His expectation is for us to be set apart and holy just as He is. In fact, I Peter 1:16 says, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” The Judge in the heavenly courtroom (God) expects perfection out of His creatures. Are you ready to meet the Judge of the Universe? He is perfect and He is holy and He demands the same from you and I. But how are you going to do this? You aren't perfect. How can you ever meet the demands of this righteous judge? It is important to remember that God the judge is not only perfect, but He is also merciful. In the Ten Commandments after saying “You shall not make for yourself an idol,” it goes on to say, “I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup>but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” Notice that lovingkindness is extended from the judge to those who love and obey Him. In Martin Luther's Small Catechism it asks what that last verse means, then answers, “God threatens to punish all that transgress these Commandments. Therefore we should fear His wrath and not act contrary to them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these Commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him and willingly do according to His Commandments.” The problem is, we can't always do His commandments, and the Judge knows it! (Luther's Small pg. 8).

#### The plaintiff (prosecution): God's Laws

In this courtroom the prosecutor that is accusing you is God's Law. Some things to know about the prosecutor. The prosecutor is out to make a case against you. His job is to demonstrate evidence of your guilt. I already mentioned the evidence that the prosecutor has against you. The evidence is all of the Laws that God gave us in the bible that you and I have broken. Every time we lied, stole, coveted, dishonored God or our parents we have broken God's Law. This plaintiff (God's Laws) comes to the perfect judge. He tells the judge how you have broken the laws over and over again. The prosecution tells stories about your sins from the time you were just tiny. Many of them you had forgotten, but you remember as true. He tells about the bickering with your sibling last week. He tells the judge about the first time you ever lied. He goes on to name numerous other stories of you not being truthful. He tells stories of when you didn't honor your mother and father, when you were greedy and selfish. The prosecution very easily demonstrates that you are a guilty person. Not only are you embarrassed, but you are also in a whole lot of trouble with the judge.

**The defendant: You**

After the prosecutor is finished listing the sins you have committed you know that you are in big trouble. What do you deserve from all of your broken promises, your bad behavior and your rebellion to truth? Remember the verse from chapter one? "For the wages of sin is death." Even sinful thoughts deserve death. If your sins were recounted in front of this Judge and courtroom you would feel like Adam and Eve did. You would want to hide and cover up the shame and guilt that everyone had seen. It's hard to believe that every one of your sins is known by God isn't it? Yet the bible tells us that God knows even the small details that are going on in the world including the fact that God knows the very number of hairs on your heads. Jesus also says, "are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." (Matt. 10:29). Not even a bird dies without God knowing about it..... We know we are guilty, because God knows all of our weaknesses and inabilities. Listen to this verse from Jeremiah chapter 17:10. The bible says, "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds." Wow! He can read our minds! No sin escapes God!

**Trouble in the Courtroom**

The Law of God (the plaintiff) has shown very clearly that you and I are sinners and have broken God's Laws. Because of this, the Holy, Perfect Judge (God) looks at us and tells us to stand up in order to hear His decision called a "verdict." The Judge says, "the court finds the defendant (you) guilty of sin. The punishment for this sin is both physical and spiritual death. When you die, you will be separated from God for eternity in a place of torment called Hell. In this place will be suffering for sins and separation from the kindness of God. There will be no joy in Hell. There will be no love in Hell. There will never be a chance to leave Hell. It will be eternal punishment. When the verdict is given there is a final raising of a little wooden mallet called a "gavel." When the Gavel is slammed down on the end of the Judges bench, the decision of the judge or verdict is final. After reading your sentence to the court. The Judge raises his gavel above his head and just as he begins to slam it

down.....  
.....  
.....

**Questions to consider:**

1. Do you realize that God knows all of your sins? How does that make you feel?
2. What does it mean that God is a perfect Judge?
3. What does the plaintiff have against each of us?
4. Who is the defendant in the story above? Do you have a good defense for your sins?

**Things to remember:**

1. God is Holy and perfect and expects the same from us.
2. You aren't Holy and perfect. You are a sinner and this means you deserve death.
3. What is going to happen to you if the gavel is slammed down in the above story?

**3****Mercy in the Courtroom****Memory Verse:**

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

Romans 8:1-2

**What would happen?**

If that gavel slammed down? Where would you go for eternity when you died? If you were found to be in your sins you would be without any hope of escaping the Law of God or the perfect Judge who gave that Law to be followed. You would be sent to an eternal punishment. Thankfully, this does not have to happen. God, the Judge is not only perfect and holy, but is also kind and compassionate. God's desire is for man to be reconciled with Him. God has shown Himself to be a God of great mercy. James 2:13 says, "For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment." Mercy triumphs over judgment!

**Good News**

What if right before the Judge slammed down His gavel, someone came into the room and yelled, "STOP!" When the Judge heard this, he immediately stopped to listen. This person said that they would like to take the punishment for your sin, only this person had kept all of God's Laws perfectly. This person did not deserve punishment and death. The person went on to say that they would like to use all of their perfection to cover your imperfection. They would willingly die in your place to set you free. Does this sound familiar? Of course it does! Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount "do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." What Jesus is saying here is that all of God's Laws were perfectly fulfilled through His life. He lived a life of complete perfection. This makes Him qualified to stand before the Law and not be prosecuted. There is no accusations from God's Law that can be brought against Jesus. He stands before the perfect judge, perfect Himself.

This is the gospel story that we read about in the New Testament. The word "gospel" means "good news." The good news is that you don't have to suffer for your sins. Christ has willingly done that in your place on the cross. In the memory verse above it says "therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." "Condemnation" comes from two Greek words and literally means "judgement against." There is no "judgement against" those who are in Christ Jesus. This means that anyone who has trusted and followed Jesus is not judged by God, but rather the judgement for their sins fell upon Christ in his suffering, crucifixion and death for our sins. But this isn't all. Not only did Jesus take our sins upon himself, but He also allowed us to borrow his righteousness. I will explain more about this in the next chapter.

**No Judgement for me at all?**

2 Corinthians 5 says "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or

bad.” Didn’t I just quote Jesus as saying “whoever believes in me has passed from judgment I to life?” Is the Bible contradicting itself? Not at all. All of the judgement for our sins have fallen on Jesus. Jesus last words on the cross were “tetelestai.” This Greek Word means “paid in full.” When the passage in 2 Corinthians says we will appear and be judged, this judgement is a judgement for rewards that will be given to Christians. The judgement seat in Greek is called a “bema.” The bema seat is where awards were given to people during ancient Roman times. Imagine for just a moment, athletes being awarded during the Olympic Games. The winners stand on a box. On the top is the gold medal, to the lower right is silver and to the lower left the bronze. Each receives an award based on what they accomplished. The same will be done for Christians at the end. Rewards will be given according to what each has done. So, yes, you will be judged Christian. But it is not a judgment that leads to punishment. Your punishment was taken care of at the cross. If you are a Christian, your judgement is for rewards!

1 Corinthians 3 talks about useless things that we have done with our lives as Christians being like they were burned up with fire. All of our bad deeds were put on the cross and all that is left over for the Christians to be judged is what Paul calls “gold, silver and precious stones.” (1 Cor. 3:12) The precious things that Christians have done will be weighed and rewarded. The other stuff was dealt with for us at the cross of Christ. In Romans 2:5-11 Paul talks about the difference between judgement that will come to a Non-Christian in verses 5-9 and then talks about judgement for the Christian in verses 10-11. “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” (Rom. 2:5-11). Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (Jn. 5:24) Isn’t that amazing news? Christ did everything for you!

### **Trust the Gospel!**

Many times during the course of your life, you will feel that you are unworthy to be a Christian. You will feel like your sin is too much for God to forgive and you will question yourself, whether or not that you are a Christian. You must remember during these moments of doubt, that you are unworthy of heaven. You must remind yourself that you don’t deserve heaven, or a relationship with God. However, you must also remind yourself that Jesus gave you the gift of salvation freely and undeserved. Gives you mercy not because you deserve it. He gives it to you because your punishment was given to Jesus, and Jesus goodness covers you. The gospel is about what God has done for you, not about what you can do for God! In my prayer book called Valley of Vision, one of the prayers says this, “I am all poverty as well as all guilt, having nothing of my own of which to repay thee, but I bring Jesus to thee in the arms of faith, pleading his righteousness to offset my iniquities, rejoicing that He will weigh down the scales for me to satisfy thy justice.”

### **Questions to consider:**

1. What would happen if God were to judge you based on your works rather than Jesus works?
2. Who took your place in the courtroom? Have you accepted this truth in your life?
3. What two Greek words does the word “condemnation” mean?
4. Is there any judgement against Christians who trust in Christ’s death in their place?
5. Hebrews 9:27 says, “it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment..” Are you prepared for your judgement?

**Things to remember:**

1. You don't deserve God's mercy. It is a gift!
2. Christians will be judged. But their judgement will be one where they are rewarded.
3. Non-Christians will be judged for their own sins and will be condemned to Hell.
4. We bring nothing to God that is worthy of salvation. We deserve wrath and punishment, but because of Christ's kindness, we receive mercy and grace.

**4****Captain America's shield...****Memory verse:**

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Romans 8:3-4

**The Shield**

Captain America's weapon of choice is his shield. It is made out of a special metal that makes it impenetrable. If you were going to be attacked in "comic world" and Captain America threw you his shield for protection, you would be saved from the enemy. The shield would protect you from the death that would normally come from being unprotected. If he gave you his shield to borrow it would also make him vulnerable to the attack that would have been coming at you. Now pay attention to this part. God demands perfection from human beings. Because we can't do this, the judgement of God is coming to each one of us. But for those of us who have trusted in Christ, we use as a shield the righteousness of Christ. It protects us from the wrath that we deserve from breaking the Laws of God. Jesus then leaves himself unprotected and takes upon himself our sin, by dying the horrible death on the cross for our sins. Justification is God giving us His righteous deeds to use as a shield while leaving himself vulnerable and taking our judgement. We didn't earn this kindness from Jesus. It is simply a "gift." We receive this gift by "faith."

In the story above, when I used Captain America's shield, it didn't become my shield. I am borrowing his shield, and because I have it, I am protected from Red Skull or whoever else I might be fighting in the comic world. God the Father who is the righteous judge looks at Christ's perfect works and based on those works of Christ, which aren't ours, we only borrow them (the shield), God doesn't punish us. Christ's works are like the impenetrable shield. They are perfect works that we borrow and God is pleased with. The punishment that we deserved, Jesus took upon Himself. All of the wrath for sin and unrighteous deeds was placed upon Him at the cross. The work of God justifying us based on the work of Christ doesn't magically change us. Instead we become outwardly protected from the wrath of God we deserve. He took that wrath on the cross and saved us from it. Jesus gave us His good works and paid for our bad works.

**Double imputation**

If you hit a double in baseball, it means you get to second base. Double means "two." You get two bases with a double. Double imputation means two things are happening at one time when Jesus died on the cross for a Christian.

The first thing to happen is that our guilt was credited to Jesus on the cross. Jesus paid the price for the sins of all Christians on the cross. The second thing to happen was the Christ's Righteousness was credited to us. All of Jesus' perfect deeds were credited to our account and God was satisfied.

For the Christian, Jesus suffered the consequences of your sin debt that you owed to a Holy God. The wrath that you deserved was poured out upon Him. Jesus did not become a sinner on the cross. Jesus became a sin offering on the cross. You did not become a perfect person at the cross. You received the perfect righteousness of Jesus credited to your account at the cross. Consider this verse, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. So, at the cross, Jesus was suffering for our sins and remained perfect. At the cross we were not punished and remain sinners saved by God’s grace. Martin Luther said about the Christian that we are “Fully just and fully sinful at the same time.” Let me explain that last statement just a little more

### **The onion on the stick**

Once, when I was a teenager, my youth group at church was having a party. One of the games that our youth minister had us play involved a huge tray full of caramel apples. He lined out ten willing and excited students. The game was to see, who could eat the caramel apple the fastest. The winner would get a gift certificate. We were all excited to see who was going to win. Finally, he yelled out “go!” Everyone quickly began to bite into the caramel apples! All of the sudden, many students started spitting out their apples and running to the bathrooms and water fountains. It was a trick! Many of the caramel apples, weren’t caramel apples at all, but instead were caramel covered onions! The students were grossed out by the fact that they had been biting into raw onions rather than the sweet apple that they expected. Now, hang with me at this point. Christians are kind of like that caramel covered onion. The beautiful, wonderful, perfect works of Christ are like that delicious, sweet caramel on the outside. It’s pleasing, sweet and amazing. However, underneath is a nasty, old, raw onion, (US). When Luther said we are “fully just” before God, he meant that we are covered by the perfect works of Jesus. When he said that we are also “fully sinful at the same time,” it reminds us that the old sinful persons that we are still exist under those works of Christ.

Even though the perfect works of Christ cover us, we still are the children of our sinful parents, Adam and Eve. This means that we will never be able to keep all of God’s Laws perfectly. Our flesh is weak and sinful. As our memory verse says above, “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.....” We as human beings were too weak to keep the law perfectly. But God, sent Christ as a human to die for sin and pay the price for it in his body. The rest of the verse then says, “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” The requirement of perfection that God’s law demanded from us is fulfilled in us when we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus death, burial and resurrection in our behalf. When we do this, the onion that is us is covered by that sweet caramel of Christ’s righteous deeds. Now, when God the father looks at you he doesn’t see the onion (your old sinful self), but instead sees the caramel (the perfect works of Christ).

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Does it help you to think of Christ’s perfect works as a shield?
2. Did you realize that Christ giving you His righteous works as a shield, also left Him with your sins and unprotected?
3. Are you as grateful to God as you should be for what He did for you on the cross?

### **Things to remember:**

1. “Justification” does not mean that you are not a sinner anymore. Remember you are like the onion under the caramel. You are still a sinner. You are just covered by Christ’s goodness.

2. "Double imputation" means that two things happened at one time at the cross. Christ's righteousness was credited to us and our guilt was credited to Jesus. He rescued us!

## 5

### A Life of Thanksgiving

#### Memory Verse:

"having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." Col. 2:14

#### Would You Be Thankful?

If I bought you the thing that you always wanted, would you be grateful? I am sure you would be. What if you were about to be hit with a car, and I jumped out in front of it and saved your life. What would you think of me? God in His grace gave to you his life. He died the horrible death of the cross to give you and I life with Him. Are you grateful? If so, does your life demonstrate that?

The grace that God gives us was not cheap. Our free-gift of salvation cost Jesus everything. Paul says to the Corinthians "you were bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your body." In other words, we owe to Jesus our bodies, because He bought us by giving His body in our place on the cross!

A famous man named Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner." We will escape that wrath and receive what He deserves, namely, eternal blessing and honor." There is a famous song called Jesus Paid It All. The chorus says, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow." Are you truly thankful to God for what He has done for you?

#### The Proper Response to God's Grace

Some might say that since we have been forgiven of our sins, it doesn't matter how we live. Jesus has paid the price for all of my sins therefore, I am free to live as I see fit! They may go on to say that we are not saved by our good deeds and therefore it doesn't matter how or what they do, they are forgiven and can do as they please. If anyone says these things, they have not realized that the gospel transforms a person's life both inside and out. It is true that we are not saved by any of our good deeds. But it is also true that we are saved "unto good deeds." Ephesians 2:8-10 spell the salvation process out very well, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." This passage of scripture says that we are saved by grace, through our faith and that this is a gift from God. This passage also goes on to say that we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works." It does matter how we live! We can't just say that we are forgiven and do whatever we want. We are called to live lives that demonstrate our thankfulness to God for what He has done for us. The Apostle Paul says in his letter to the Romans 5:1-2, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" Our response to Jesus graciously taking our place on the cross should not be to continue in our sin like it meant nothing, but rather living a life as best we can to please God. God has graciously given us His Spirit to dwell in Christians. His Spirit comforts us when we need it and also convicts us of sin when we need it. Our proper response to God's grace should be lives that strive to be Holy. When we do mess up, we have God's safety net of grace there to catch us. I John 2:1-2 says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may

not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" Notice that John says he is writing to the church so that they will not sin! Sin is a big deal and Christians are to flee from it. After healing the man at the pool in John 5:14 Jesus warns him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." He also tells the woman caught in adultery that he forgives to "go and sin no more." (Jn. 8:11). Our proper response to Christ's sacrifice and forgiveness is to repent and turn from sin. When Zacchaeus believed in Jesus do you remember what he said? "Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." (Lk. 19:8) Grace led Zacchaeus to obedience, not disobedience. However, our flesh is weak sometimes and we do mess up. It is during those times we remember the verse above, "if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" An advocate is someone who is fighting in your corner. Jesus fought sin and death for you and defeated both. Because of Him, you are totally forgiven. He is your advocate fighting in your corner!

### **Thankful in Every Situation**

Fanny Crosby was born March 24, 1820. When she was born, she had an eye infection. Her parents sought help from someone who smeared a paste in her eyes. Unfortunately, the paste blinded Fanny. Even though early on she lost the ability to see, she was still a very happy and thankful child. At just 8 years old she wrote this poem:

"Oh, what a happy child I am, although I cannot see,  
I am resolved that in this world contented I will be,  
How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't,  
So weep or sigh because I'm blind, I cannot nor-I won't."

Fanny's condition did not keep her from enjoying a full life of God's blessings. It also didn't keep her from living a life of thankfulness to God. Fanny realized all that Christ had done for her in the gospel and that caused her to not concentrate on her temporary condition of blindness, but instead to love and adore the God that she would spend eternity with. Instead of being caught up in the difficult situation of blindness, Fanny concentrated on the love of God she had experienced in the gospel. When we come to realize that our sins mean that we deserve to be eternally separated from God, yet the cross rescued us from this fate, it should move us to love God with our whole hearts! No matter what our difficulties, or problems, we are guaranteed a relationship with God forever through Christ's death, burial and resurrection on our behalf. There is an old song that says, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." When we understand the gospel, we know that we can face any of life's difficulties, knowing that in the end we will spend eternity with God. If you have believed the gospel, there is no longer a judgement against you. You have been justified completely and you are no longer held accountable for your sins. In all of life's difficulties you must remember the important truth that in God's courtroom, your judgement fell upon Jesus and His goodness fell upon you. Because this is true, remember Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Are you truly thankful for what Jesus did for you on the cross?
2. What is the proper response to God's goodness?
3. Since Jesus paid the price for all of my sins, is it ok for me to just go on sinning? Why or why not?

### **Things to remember:**

1. On several occasions, Jesus warned people about sin including the man he healed at the pool and the woman caught in adultery.
2. The grace that God gives us should not be taken lightly. It cost Jesus His life. We should take His commands and His sacrifice in our place seriously.
3. Why should we be thankful in every circumstance? Why is Fanny Crosby a good example of this?

## Memory Verses

### **Wages and Gifts:**

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:23

### **Trouble in the Courtroom:**

“as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.”

Romans 3:10

### **Mercy in the Courtroom:**

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Romans 8:1-2

### **Captain America’s Shield:**

“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Romans 8:3-4

### **A Life of Thanksgiving:**

“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Colossians 2:14