

Doctrine of Justification

The Protestant View

1. The motto of the Reformation in relation to justification was Sola Fide, or by faith alone. This term was shorthand for believing in Christ alone.
2. Rome also stressed that faith was vital to justification. However, Rome said that faith was a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition for justification. Faith is one plank of justification, but sacramentalism is the other plank. You cannot have faith without justification, said Rome, but you cannot have justification without faith.
3. The controversy between Luther and Rome was on the term sola, alone.
4. Because of the Reformation, several final positions have emerged.
 - Rome's final position is that Faith + Works = Justification.
 - Arianism's (Antinomianism) final position is that Faith = Justification – Works.
 - The Reformer's final position is that Faith = Justification + Works.

Special Note.

It is to be observed that the “works” in the Reformed position is on the other side of justification, because works add nothing to justification. Rather, good works flow from the root of righteousness, or being justified before God. Good works are not the ground of justification. God does not justify, or declare a man righteous because of any good works.

- *Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*
 - *Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*
5. Apart from works, God provides justification for sinners.

6. At the heart of the controversy between Luther and Rome is the question of the ground, or root of justification, for if there is no justification, if the wrath of God marked iniquity, who could stand? The answer, “No one, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
7. In answering this inquiry, Rome took an Analytical View of Justification.

Special Note.

An analytical view is a statement that is proven by definition. Example. $2 + 2 = 4$. Example. “An unmarried man is a bachelor.” No new information is provided in the predicate that is not in the subject. In theological terms, God will only pronounce a person just whom He finds to be righteous.

Righteousness is inherent in a person, or God would not declare the person just. A person cannot be justified without grace, without faith, without good works. True faith, and true repentance must be present, but, in the final analysis, a person is righteous in the sight of God, which allows God to be just in justifying, or declaring a person righteous. A person is declared righteous because he is righteous, according to Rome.

8. The Reformers point to Scripture to declare that God justifies the unrighteous, and is just to do so.
9. The Reformers came to this position based on a Synthetic View of Justification. A synthetic statement is something new in the predicate, that is not analytically contained in the subject.

Special Note.

Example. “The bachelor is a poor man.” Something new is added in the predicate that is not found in the subject. While all bachelors are unmarried, not all bachelors are poor. Some are well off.

10. Theologically, when God declares a person to be just in His sight, it is not because God finds, upon analysis, something in the person that is righteous. Rather, God justifies a person on the ground, on the basis that something is added. What is added to the soul of a sinner is the righteousness of Christ.
 - *1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*
 - *Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*
11. Luther insisted that the righteousness of Christ is Extra Nos, or apart from a person. This is an Alien Righteousness. It is something outside of a person.
12. Luther went on to say something that remains controversial today. He spoke of the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ.

- 13.** It is the word imputation, to which Rome reacted violently. Rome believed in an inherited righteousness, the righteousness of the sinner.
- 14.** Luther insisted upon an imputed righteousness, the righteousness of Another, even Jesus the Righteous One.
- 15.** Luther was on Scriptural ground to speak of Divine imputation of righteousness.
- *Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:*
 - *Romans 4:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*
 - *James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*
- 16.** Rome is still emotionally and violently opposed to the Doctrine of Imputation, but in being opposed to this doctrine is found to be arguing against Scripture.
- 17.** The number one example for the Doctrine of Imputation is Abraham.
- *Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*
 - *Galatians 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*
- 18.** Abraham was still a sinner. He continued to do things contrary to the known will of the Lord, and yet Abraham is set forth as the Father of the Faithful. God will justify the heathen.
- *Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*
- 19.** To impute, means to transfer legally to someone else, something. To reckon it to be theirs. Abraham was counted, he was reckoned to be righteous, even though Abraham, in and of himself, was not yet righteous.
- 20.** There is a huge difference between Rome's position of infusing grace into the soul of a believer, and God imputing the righteousness of Christ to the believer.

21. Rome believes that the grace of God is poured into the soul through the sacraments, and on the basis of that infused grace a person becomes inherently righteous, and therefore can be justified, or declared righteous in the sight of God. In this scenario a person is righteous.
22. The Protestant view is that God justifies the ungodly, and is just in doing so because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. The ground of justification is when God imputes Someone else's righteousness to their account.
23. The formula that Luther used to set forth his position is Simul Justus Et Peccator, meaning, simultaneously justified, and sinner. At the same time a person is just, the person is a sinner.
24. Luther was not saying that at the same time, and in the same manner, a person is justified and a sinner, because that would be a contradiction.
25. Luther was saying that, from one perspective, in one sense, we are just. However, in another perspective, and in another sense, we are a sinner.
26. Both concepts are true.
27. In, and of themselves, under divine scrutiny, every person is a sinner. There is no denying the fact.
28. It is also true that in Christ, every sinner is seen by God to be righteous, for when God sees the blood of Christ, He passes over those who are covered by the blood.
29. This is the heart of the gospel. "Will I be judged by my own righteousness in order to get into heaven?" Or, "Will I be judged in Christ, and by His righteousness, in order to get into heaven?"
30. The good news of the gospel is this. I can be justified in the sight of God by faith the righteousness of Another, even Jesus Christ.
31. It is not on the basis of what I have done that I am justified, but on the basis of what Christ has done for me.
32. Rome's reaction against the Doctrine of Imputation is surprising, because their own theology teaches that sins are imputed to Christ on the Cross, otherwise there is no value in the atoning death of Jesus.
33. Moreover, Rome teaches that from the Treasury of Merit, sinners receive the righteousness of others by imputation.
34. Well, no one ever accused Christians of being consistent.
35. At the heart of the gospel is a Double Imputation. My sins are imputed to Christ in His death at Calvary; His righteousness is imputed to me, the sinner, at the point of regeneration.

36. In this two fold transaction, we find that God does not negotiate sin, or compromise with sin, but retains His own righteousness so that He is both just, and the justifier.

- *Romans 3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

37. My sin goes to Jesus. His righteousness comes to me in the sight of God.

38. Here is a doctrine worth dying for. It is an article of faith worth dividing the church over, for on it we stand or fall, live or die.