

W307-JUSTIFICATION.mp3

[00:00:04] This is a tape recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book, and it is a part of a series entitled Short Studies to Young Believers. And this is a group of four studies. Two of them have already been recorded. The two recorded dealt with redemption that leads you out and the atonement that leads you in gives you access. The two that follow to make the completion of this one faith have to deal with justification. And then the second one over 20 minutes will be the question of predestination and how you're going to get predestination with all its problems into 20 minutes is a problem that I cannot solve. I'll wait till the end of the afternoon and see how far we get, but we'll do our best as time permits and opportunity. Now, when we were dealing with redemption and atonement, the passage before us was Romans chapter three. And while you're finding that, I will tell you who are listening that we've already read Daniel, the fifth chapter where Belshazzar was told that he was weighed in the balances and found wanting, because that will have a place in our story in a moment. Now, if you look at Romans chapter three, I was going to deal with redemption, which comes in verse 24. But you see, when I started reading verse 20, I got no flesh justified, verse 21, The righteousness of God without the law. Verse 22, The righteousness of God, which is by faith and then justified freely in verse 24, and that God might be just.

[00:01:47] And the justifier in verse 26, it surrounded by the emphasis upon righteousness and justification. You see, redemption is not merely an act of kindness, redemption. Redemption is a part of a process that God instituted that he might be justified. Don't forget that he's justified when he saves you. If he couldn't be, it would be intolerable. Our salvation would be in jeopardy. But when I know that all the righteous requirements of God are absolutely completely settled, at last I can have peace as it says, wherefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Well, now the first thing I want to do is to remind ourselves of the basic meaning of this word righteousness. And actually, in this chapel, I've just drawn in chalk on the board a pair of scales. And those of you who are listening to this recording, it doesn't matter whether you can draw or not. You can easily imagine a pair of scales. Well, now that is the figure that's chosen by God, and it comes about 5 or 6 times in the Scriptures that He is a God of just weights and a just balance. The two figures that He adopts in the Bible to represent righteousness is a pair of scales which is governed by gravitation and a

plumb line which is governed by gravitation. And they swing into their position quite irrespective of whether you like them or not.

[00:03:21] It's perfectly balanced. Now there are some folks who have found a great thing to criticize in the Old Testament when the law of Moses stipulates an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. And I said as a very primitive, barbaric thing, but they are entirely wrong for an eye for an eye is just saying 20 shillings to the pound or 16oz to the pound. And when you when you can produce to be a housewife who goes into a shop and she says, well, I don't like to demand, Mr. Grocer, that you will always give me 16oz to the pound because I don't want to be barbaric and primitive. That sounds too much like an eye for an eye. Of course it is. There is no mercy possible in justice. You either can give God 100% or you're out. And so we've got the figure here that the Old Testament word for righteousness means a just white adjust balance. Quite impersonal. And as we've already suggested, you and I, by nature are all belshazzar's. We are weighed in the balances and found wanting. Now, in this Romans three, the apostle knows that for he says in verse 23, for all have sinned and come short. The glory of God is God's estimate. The word glory is associated with testing of mettle and seeing whether it's genuine and you've been put into the balances and you're found wanting. Well, now you're either try to fog God off with a dividend and you won't get away with it, or you'll stand in his presence and say, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and he'll provide it.

[00:05:03] Well, now for the rest of our few minutes, I want to ask you to look at some of the first few chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where I'm going to take righteousness in these forms. I'll tell you what I'm hoping to tell you. Like the Negro preacher, he said he first of all told them and then he says, I tells them what I what I see. So first of all, he says, I tells them what I'm going to tell them. And then he says, I tell them. And when I'm done, I tells them what I told them. Well, he ought to know it by then, didn't you? Well, first of all, I'm going to tell you what I'm going to tell you. I'm going to tell you in the first five chapters of Romans, we get this righteousness revealed. Second chapter and third chapter, Righteousness required. Third chapter again at the bottom, Righteousness and redemption. Fourth chapter, Righteousness and reckoning. I think we get stuck there and I think we get much further. Do you? You see? You've got it Now let's see how far we can go with looking at Romans and seeing how justification enters into the story. Romans Chapter 116. For. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of

Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believe it, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

[00:06:22] Why? Why? Why is it the power of God unto salvation? One answer alone is given. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. There's the power of God unto salvation. You have not merely been forgiven and let off. You have been acquitted and dismissed. You are now standing in God's presence as a person who is positively righteous, not negatively forgiven. Where does the righteousness come from? How do you get it? Oh, that's a legitimate question. But before the apostle goes on to that, he touches another aspect because God doesn't treat us as automatic machines and you drop a penny in the slot and you get a certain amount of salvation out. He deals with us as moral creatures who have a responsibility and he appeals to us. So before he goes further with this question, because if you know Romans enough, you know that in Chapter three. Verse 21, He's picked up where he left off. Ready said. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. He's already said that in the verse 17, for there is the righteousness of God revealed, it manifested, it's made known, and he appeals to one of the prophets in verse 17. Well, now, further down this chapter you find him talking about those who had no scriptures, but they could learn from creation.

[00:07:54] Verse 20. About the eternal power and godhead of the Creator. And though without without excuse. For their idolatry. And so right down to the end of this chapter, which ends up with a dreadful list of the things that characterize Pagan Rome. And now you must remember that in the church at Rome, there was a large percentage of Jewish Christians. There was others who were Gentile Christians. Some of them had been heathen and pagans, but a great majority yet were Roman in Rome, as everyone else in the synagogues, there were Jewish Christians. And you can quite understand when they started reading the epistle to the Romans in the synagogue, as they would the Jewish Christians, women are nodding their head and saying, Oh, yes, yes, these pagan Romans are a bad lot, you see. All right, says the apostle. All right. Now look at chapter two. Verse one. Therefore, thou are inexcusable. O man. Whosoever thou art the judgest. For wherein thou judgest another thou condemns thyself, For thou the judges do as the same things. Verse three. And thinkest thou This old man is he. They were. They were getting the idea that because they happened to be descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they were in a different list. Or he says, No, not with regard

to sin, with regard to dispensation or privilege. Yes, the Jew was first, but you all stand level when it's a matter of whether you're sinful or whether you're not.

[00:09:22] And so he says to them further down in the same chapter, verse 17, Behold thou art called a Jew and rest in the law and makes thy boast of God and so on, right the way down this list, all the things they could bring up which made them so different. But he said, the more different you are from the Gentile because of these things, the more different you ought to be in your manner of life. And so in chapter three, he says, verse ten, It is written, There is none righteous. No, not one. Now he's quoting the Old Testament, and this Old Testament statement wasn't speaking of the Gentile idolaters. It was speaking of the chosen people of God. There is none righteous. No, not one. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now, verse 2019, we know that what things soever the law saith it, saith to them which are under the law. Now that's speaking to the Jew. They were under the law. Now then that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God. So now you see, he started off with righteousness revealed Romans 11:6 and 17. He it occupies the remainder of chapter one, the whole of chapter two and a part of chapter three to show that righteousness is required by both sides, the Jew and the Gentile. Here they stand absolutely on a parallel. So now he begins to bring to bear the question of redemption.

[00:10:54] On justification. That's the third one. You see these all begin with the letter. Are righteousness revealed, righteousness required, righteousness and redemption. So we have it verse 24, being justified freely without a cause by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. That's where we are justified. And the propitiation or the atonement or the mercy seat that has been provided by Christ justifies God. Isn't that wonderful? You were justified by the blood of Christ from one angle, and God is perfectly justified to save you and bless you and take you to glory by the same blood of Christ from another angle. God and man. Absolutely perfectly satisfied in the fullest sense of the word. That's justification. And so we've got now the the ending up in verse 27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded by what law that works nay above the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. The epistle to Titus takes it a stage further when he says, We are justified by grace. Not merely by faith, but by grace. Because there are some who believe justification by faith, make faith into a sort of a modified work. That is to say, you can't obey the law of Moses. So if you only believe the gospel, God will take that as a sort of a second rate

obedience. Now he pushes it all on one side and he says, You're justified by grace, and the law and its works never come into it at all.

[00:12:32] Well, now the next question to ask is how does this justification, this righteous standing, become mine? Well, here we have another word righteousness reckoned I was in two minds whether I would read Isaiah 53. And you remember in Isaiah 53, there's one passage which says. He was numbered with the transgressors. Therefore, shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities that were numbered. Could be translated, reckoned, or could be translated. Counted. Numbered counted record. Well, of course I want record because that begins with the letter R. Now, when you look at Chapter four. Verse three. What? That the Scripture. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. That's the word I'm dealing with. He hadn't done a single thing that was good or right. He just stood before God. God had made a promise to him, a staggering promise. He looked at the heavens and he thought of the magnificence and the power of God. He just believe what God said. And although he hadn't done any righteousness, it was counted to him. Let's come a stage further now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned. Now that's the same word as counted, only they've changed it. It's just as good. So I'm adopting that the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

[00:14:00] That's true today. In the ordinary way. I haven't been employed by an employer since the year 1904, so I can forget whether I say thank you for my wages or not. But I should imagine that even today, uncouth as we become at the end of a week, if you were handed out your packet of ten, 15, 20 or £30 or whatever it is you get, you would say thank you. But nevertheless, you know, this that it's it's not a a bit of grace. It's a debt that's recoverable at all, as if you've earned it. But the wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life. So there's the difference. But he says to him, the work is not. It doesn't mean to say that you're going to be exempt from work and say, Well, I needn't bother about earning their living after this because be a kind of Christian. No, it's simply working at your salvation to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly. Notice that not justifies the be the beginner who is starting to believe and tries to be good. No justifies the ungodly his faith is counted for. Here we are getting this word reckoned again counted for righteousness. It isn't righteousness it's counted for. But it's not a bit of make believe because I'll illustrate it as I've had to

before, by something that you know all about. I should imagine that most of you in this chapel, or most of you who are listening will know what a pound note looks like.

[00:15:32] Some of you may even possess one, I don't know, in this chapel. And if you were to take it out and read it, you would find that it isn't a pound. But it simply says that the Bank of England promises to pay you a pound on demand. So that piece of paper is reckoned for a pound and you can go to any shop and you'll get a pounds were for it. But of itself, it's it's only just about good enough to like a person's pipe. And if you did happen to throw it on the fire you'd realize that you hadn't lost a pound in gold. You'd lost just a piece of paper just like that. That's all it is. But it's good enough. We live by that. And just in the same way, our faith, which isn't worth more than a scrap of paper itself, is counted for, reckoned for the gold in the Bank of God. And the gold in the bank of God is the person and work of Christ. And we're accepted because of Him and because of it. Well, now that brings us. You see, this word counted for comes back again at the end of the chapter where it's translated imputed. So we've got another word, rendering it exactly the same term, verse 22, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, reckoned to him, counted to him.

[00:16:58] But for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him. That raised up Jesus, our Lord from the dead. Now the finishing words of this chapter who was delivered our version says for our offences. And that's rather vague and has misled some people. I'm going to revise it who was delivered because of our offenses and was raised again because of. Our justification. Christ was not raised from the dead in order to get our justification and procure it. He would never have been raised from the dead if our justification hadn't been accomplished. So you find in chapter five, if you'll look verse nine, much more then being justified by his blood. So the justification took place on the cross, the work, the transaction was done and being raised from the dead. We have the guarantee in the pledge that God has accepted it. Oh, what a lot more can be said about being justified. It sums it up in chapter five, verse one. Therefore, being justified by faith. And there's no other way of being justified in the Scriptures. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And this opens up another aspect, a very important one. The fruit of righteousness is peace and the word peace in the Old Testament. Shalom means perfect. Complete a transaction done. The whole enmity settled. Peace is not quietness.

[00:18:31] You might be causing the biggest hullabaloo because of peace, but it's the real thing. Something has been settled. And the something is between you and God and your sin. It's all done. Finished. Now you're justified. And now you're at peace. I've just finished this first summing up by mentioning a little device we use with a Sunday school once. And that was this. I have a piece of paper which I screwed up a little bit, flipped it over, and when you looked at it like that, it simply said the word justified. See? And then we were trying to say to the children, well, what does justified mean? I think I gave this to Mrs. Welch to give to her children, and she used it. I didn't. But then you put it open like that and you read God treats me just as if I'd never done it. That's a crude way of saying it, but that's what's happened. We are justified because God treated his son who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. And he treats me who was the unrighteous one, just as if I had never done it. For he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Well, that brings us to the end of our first section, and we just pause for a moment before we pick up the second subject, which is the the reference, the subject entitled Predestination.