

The Traveling Pulpit

Published By



Covenant of Grace Ministries

2704 Fairway Drive
Greensboro, NC 27408

Burley W. Moore—Bible Teacher

e-mail: burleymoore@juno.com
www.covenantofgraceministries.com

Phone (336) 292-2408

Listen to Covenant of Grace Radio over www.covenantofgraceministries.com
Or Over AM830 WTRU in the Triad at 1:00 PM Every Sunday Afternoon

Volume 6, Number 2

April

Spring 2011

In this edition of The Traveling Pulpit, I conclude the message that I began in our last quarterly publication. It's a message that I preached at the Tri-State Particular Baptist Ministers Meeting held at the Beacon Baptist Church in Burlington, NC, on June 7th of last year. The subject that was assigned to me was taken from a quote by Martin Luther. It is a quote of which we need to be reminded today.

Justification by Faith, The Mark of a Standing or Fallen Church **(Part II)**

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 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: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Rom. 3:21-28

The Provision of Justification v. 21-23

“The righteousness of God” is God’s gracious act of salvation, in making righteous a sinful people. To make a sinner righteous means to make a depraved person right with God and no sinner can do that on his own. The Gospel is not contrary to the “law” of Moses, but the “righteousness of God” is not obtained by our obedience to it. Only God can make the sinner right with Him and that is “by faith of Jesus Christ”, trusting Christ to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. The words “by faith” are most significant in how “the righteousness of God” is received. “By faith” lets us know that “faith” is the primary and not secondary cause of our justification.

This display of God's "righteousness" portrays His holiness and grace in the fact that He accepts and pardons sinners only through "faith" in Christ. Regardless of who we are, "there is no difference ... all have sinned" and have been weighed on God's scales of justice and found wanting. Sin must be paid for and God took our place and paid our penalty in the death of His only begotten Son. His "righteousness" required a payment and His grace provided it in His very own incarnation and atonement.

The Plan of Justification v. 24-26

Scripture makes it as clear as can be that sinners can only be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Biblical justification is the opposite of condemnation and can only be known by the imputed righteousness of Christ which makes it possible for the believer to share the same righteous status as our risen Lord. God's justification of the sinner is not based upon man's works, man's goodness, man's faith, not even man's foreseen future faith. It is merely and solely a gift ("freely" given) of God upon undeserving sinners. The sinner is "justified" by God's "grace through the redemption" paid for us by "Christ Jesus" on the cross. "Redemption" speaks of paying a ransom payment in order to secure the release and freedom of a prisoner or slave. The only acceptable payment that could redeem a sinner from his bondage to sin and its rightly deserved punishment was the "blood" of Jesus Christ.

Immediately, we are pointed to the cross of Christ for our justification where God made public declaration of "propitiation" in His shed "blood." Since we could not satisfy the demands of a holy and righteous God, Christ did it for us in paying the penalty of our sins on the cross. Our justification is not based upon what we do, but what Christ has done for us in appeasing the holiness of God in causing Jesus to suffer the wrath that we rightly deserved. The Hebrew equivalent of the word "propitiation" describes the Old Testament mercy seat where the priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice to make atonement for the sins of the people. Only in Christ can a just and holy God declare a sinner righteous and show mercy upon hell-deserving sinners.

The Reformed doctrine of justification has been called "synthetic justification" (God doing for the sinner what the sinner cannot do for himself) whereas the Roman Catholic doctrine is referred to as "analytical justification" (the sinner doing something himself). Analytical justification declares a person's justification possible based upon his cooperation with God. Synthetic justification declares that only the imputation of Christ's righteousness can make the sinner right with God. Justification is by works only in the sense that it is the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross that justifies sinners. It is by God-given "faith" that the work of Christ is appropriated to our unworthy souls. Therefore, we can say that we are justified by faith in the work of Christ that was performed on our behalf.

Notice how justification involves the "remission of sins." When we use the word, "remission", we are talking about forgiveness, pardon, or deliverance. However, as we relate the word, "remission", to justification, let's think about the word in two specific ways. When a person is treated for a cancerous tumor and it disappears, we say that the cancer has gone into remission. Likewise, when we pay a bill, we can say that we have remitted payment toward what we owed. The root of the word "remission" simply means to send and it's the same root from which we get the words mission or missionary. Therefore, when we speak of the

“remission of sins”, we’re talking about the sending away of our sins. It’s like the removal of our sin debt from God’s divine ledger and our account stamped paid in full with the blotting out of our transgression from the sight of God.

Because Jesus has earned our salvation by His finished work on the cross, He is “just, and the justifier of him which believe in Jesus.” How can a just and holy God justify ungodly sinners and at the same time not ignore their sin? In the plan of God, He chose to punish Jesus in our place as our Substitute in order for Him to justify the guilty without compromising His own “righteousness.”

The Proceeds of Justification v. 27-28

The results of our salvation leave man without anything of which to selfishly boast. Man has no contribution whatsoever to make toward his salvation thus giving him no right to take any credit. Man is totally worthless of his redemption and the only goodness credited to his account is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It’s totally impossible for human achievement to ever merit a right standing with God.

Failure to grasp this truth is to misunderstand the Gospel message of saving grace. The very heart of the Gospel is the fact that God alone saves sinners “by grace ... through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

God alone can declare the wicked righteous because of Christ and this very truth must humble the redeemed sinner making him realize that it’s impossible for man to save himself. Salvation is not determined by any DECISION that man makes, if so, then man could “boast” about his contribution to it. It is by the sovereign choosing of God ALONE and it was from “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4-7).

Closing

True believers must learn to live together in love and harmony as we are admonished to do from the Scriptures (I Jh. 3:14). It would do us well to apply the old principle: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” However, that does not mean we’ll never have to deal with error infiltrating into the church. There are some areas where there must never be compromise among the people of God. From Paul’s writings to the Galatians, we are reminded of his warning never to “pervert the gospel” and to mix works as a requirement in any way whatsoever for justification (Gal. 1:6-10). The Judaizers were trying to add works to the gospel, which is a corruption of the “gospel” of Jesus Christ. This caused Paul to pronounce an apostolic curse on such, by using the word, “anathema” (accursed).

The Reformed doctrine of justification by faith alone was condemned and called “anathema” by the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in the 16th century. The Reformers considered this action to be a condemnation of the true biblical gospel. At Trent, Rome rejected the very article, on which the church stands or falls. The truth of the matter is that while the doctrine of justification by faith alone may be somewhat understood with our minds, it can only be fully embraced with the same God-given faith whereby we are saved. Many within the circle of Protestantism today, will argue and sneer at this great grand glorious biblical truth. Many churches claim to believe that salvation is “by grace ... through faith” (Eph. 2:8-9), but then

turn around and say that the sinner must meet God half-way with “faith” being man’s contribution and “grace” is God’s. Such a concept of salvation, is to corrupt the Gospel of Jesus Christ simply because man has absolutely no contribution to make toward his salvation or else it would be “works” and he could “boast.”

Most visible churches of our day have become no more than social clubs and community centers, because the words of Martin Luther are true, justification by faith alone is “the article with and by which the church stands, without which it falls.” Justification by Faith alone is a truth that needs to be recovered by the church of today. Unless there is Revival and Reformation in the churches of our land, there will not be much left worth having in our nation. However, it’s comforting to know that God has always had His “remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5), that it’s God Who does the choosing (Jh. 15:16), that His Church will prevail (Matt. 16:18), and that His Word is changeless, from everlasting to everlasting (Mk. 13:31).

A MINISTRY UPDATE

Once again, I remind our readers that the name of our quarterly Bible Study was changed the beginning of this year from “The Circuit Rider” to “The Traveling Pulpit.” Everything remains the same except for the name. My goal is to present a concise study of some portion of Holy Scripture in hopes that the soul of some saint will be fed the Word and built up in the most holy faith. God continues to supply the needs of this little ministry, allowing us to teach God’s Word over the radio each week. Every year the number of “hits” has increased over the web. When we launched the Internet Ministry in 2007, we had a total of 2,667 “hits” within nine months. In 2008, there was a total of 9,152 “hits”; in 2009, it grew to 13,458 “hits”; and last year (2010) we reached a total of 16,552 “hits” from around the world. It’s truly amazing how the Internet allows us to have a worldwide ministry from a tiny little speck in my home. God has blessed me beyond measure in letting me teach His precious Word to those who have “ears to hear.” To all of our prayer and financial supporters, I want to say, “thank you from the bottom of my heart” for your kindness and faithfulness to the Lord and this ministry.

Because of His Sovereign Grace.....BWM

The Traveling Pulpit

Published Quarterly by

Covenant of Grace Ministries

2704 Fairway Drive
Greensboro, NC 27408

Burley W. Moore-Bible Teacher



Listen to COVENANT OF GRACE RADIO over www.covenantofgraceministries.com
or over AM830 on WTRU in the Triad at 1:00 PM every Sunday afternoon