

Justification by Faith Alone: Wholeheartedly Believing in What is Affirmed in the Apostles' Creed

A Discussion of Lord's Day 23 of 'The Heidelberg Catechism'

1. Q. & A. # 59

- a. *Scriptural Support for Understanding: Romans 1:16-17; 5:1-2; 8:16-17*
- b. From Catechism used at home: "What are some other words [beside justifies] the Bible uses to describe the result of [God's grace]? ...**forgiven, reconciled** and **adopted.**" In essence, we are saved by the merits of Jesus on our behalf.
- c. "The universal consequences of Adam's sin are the *assumption* of Paul's argument [in Romans]; the power of Christ's act to cancel those consequences is its *goal*" (Moo). "What we *are* and what we *become* as individuals is the mere outcome of their deeds" (Seifrid).

2. Q. & A. # 60

- a. *Scriptural Support for Understanding: Romans 3:21-26; 6:20-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13*
- b. Double Imputation
 - i. Aka – "the Great, or Sweet, Exchange"
 - ii. From Catechism used at home: Only by trusting in Jesus' righteousness and death in [our place can we be made right with God]. In Christ, alone, we are declared righteous because He is our substitute. "Jesus was punished as if he committed all our sins, and we are blessed as if we were as perfect as him."
- c. DeYoung – "...the Christian is 'at the same time, justified and a sinner.' ...our right standing with God is based on an 'alien righteousness'. I am not right with God because of my righteousness, but because 'the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ. We contribute nothing to our salvation ...the righteousness of Christ is ours by imputation, not by impartation...or infusion, but rather Christ's righteousness is *credited* to our account. " Yet, as a result of our righteous standing before God with Christ as our substitute, the Holy Spirit bears fruit in our lives and works that are pleasing to God.
 - i. Article 12
 1. **James 2:14-26**
- d. **Rom. 5:17** – recipients of the free gift "enjoy a transfer from this domain to the other" (Moo). **Rom 6: 2.-** Sin [and the Law] should be understood as a power; its "rule" or "realm". "Paul asserts in this passage the inseparability of justification and sanctification as provided for equally in Christ" (Moo). **6.-**"Old Man" is not ontological but positional. This speaks of a change of relationship; not nature. **7-14.-**Means "set free from the power of sin"; dead to sin [& law] as final/definitive which we share in Christ (*cf. 1:5; 16:26 "obedience of faith"*). Deadness to sin and aliveness to God; thus habitual sin should not occupy our lives. Contrast "law" and "grace" (sin vs. God; death vs. life; wage earned vs. gift). "As long as sin reigns, God and righteousness cannot; and neither, as long as law reigns, can Christ and the Spirit" (Moo).

3. Q. & A. # 61

- a. *Scriptural Support for Understanding: Romans 4:13-16; Ephesians 2:8-10*
- b. Article 13
- c. DeYoung – "...we are justified by faith alone [and it is upon this doctrine that] 'the whole church stands or falls'". There is nothing we contribute to our salvation but our sin, no merit we bring but Christ's, and nothing necessary for justification except faith alone. [However] faith is only an *instrumental* cause in our salvation. In other words, faith is not what God finds acceptable in us. In fact, strictly speaking, faith itself does not justify. Faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ, have communion with Him, and share in all His benefits. It is the *object* of our faith that matters. So be sure to rest in Jesus Christ and not your faith in Him. He alone is the one who died for our sakes and was raised for our justification."
 - i. Article 11
 1. Rodgers – "...saving faith does not arise out of man's effort but comes from God. Saving faith is a response to the prior offer of God in Christ. Apart from the gift of the Gospel, there could be no saving faith. Moreover, saving faith is due to the inner work of the Holy Spirit regenerating the believer's heart and opening him or her to the Gospel. Apart from the gracious regenerating and illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, there would be no saving faith. Saving faith is a gift that accepts a gift. Apart from justification by grace through faith in Christ, there is no peace with God, or with our brothers and sisters in Christ, or our neighbors, or, in the long run, within ourselves."