

ESSENTIALS - Session 2 ... "The Essential Gospel"

INTRO

Martin Luther had a revelation... Why was he so tortured?

"This article (Justification) is the head and cornerstone of the Church which alone begets, nourishes, builds, and protects the Church. Without it the church of God could not subsist for one hour"" "

If the article of justification be once lost, then is all true Christian doctrine lost".

- Martin Luther

GOSPEL – *"Good news", but what's the bad news?*

- How good is usually related to how bad
- **Romans 1:18**

RIGHTEOUS – *"Fulfilling all legal and moral obligations"*

- Luther, Adam and Eve, and ALL Of US...we all have felt the tension
- **Romans 3:23-24, 28**
- Scales are not the answer!

We Learn A Lot From the Old Testament Sacrificial System

- Daily, Monthly, Sabbath and Special Days. It was pretty bloody...for a reason!

"Every drop of animal blood was a reminder of the huge gap between a perfectly holy God and his consistently unholy people. Every bellow or bleat of an animal as it was being slaughtered was a cry for a better sacrifice, one that would finally satisfy the righteous requirements of a Holy God. Every step of the priest, as he trudged his way to the tabernacle to do his bloody, smelly job one more time, was a sign that something more was needed. Every time an Israelite family culled through their flock to find the appropriate lamb for sacrifice was a reminder that God is holy and we are not. The bloody, noisy slaughter of each animal confronted every Israelite with the truth that it was his sin that caused this animal's death. The violence, the blood, the horrible odors, and the repetition of it all was a prophetic cry for a Messiah Lamb. This bloody system would not end with a divine declaration of blanket acceptance; no, it would take a sacrifice to end this system of unending sacrifices."

- Paul David Tripp, "Do You Believe"

- We learn about God's patience, mercy, holiness, righteous anger, and about the seriousness of sin.
- We learn we can't earn acceptance with God, that the Law won't work to fix this, and that there's a need for a permanent sacrifice that is BOTH merciful and just.
- Remember that God has to be God.

So What is the Answer?

- Spoiler Alert: It's not a "what", it's a "Who".

“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
 Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
 Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed...
 Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened
 not his mouth.” **Isaiah 53: 4-5,7**

JUSTIFICATION – “To Pronounce or Declare Righteous”

- “Therefore, since we have been declared righteous (Justified) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1
- **Romans 3:23-24, 28**
- Scales are not the answer!

JUSTIFICATION VS. SANCTIFICATION

“Perhaps most critically, justification is a POSITION – established immediately and completely upon conversion, whereas sanctification is a **process** of internal changes...” **C.J. Mahaney**

“**Justification is an ACT.** It is not a work, or series of acts. **It is not progressive.** The weakest believer and the strongest saint are alike and equally justified. Justification admits no degrees. A man is **either wholly justified or wholly condemned** in the sight of God.” **William S. Plumer**

If you are a believer, by definition you have been declared righteous in the sight of God. You have permanent and unbreakable peace with God.

“Only let us live up to what we **have attained.**” Phil 3:16

“**ESSENTIAL Takeaway**”

So What Does This Have To Do With Wednesday Or Any Other Day?

If you forget:

- Legalism – Trying to earn God’s acceptance thru our own obedience.
- “Do Right, good results. Do bad, bad results.”
- False Arrogance – the sense you’ve earned something that was given to you
- Less compassion for the lost and less enthusiasm to evangelize

If you Remember:

- Assurance, Peace, Hope, Freedom

“**REMIND ME WHO I AM!**”

Discussion Questions

- C.J. Mahaney wrote, “You’ll never be more justified than you are today.” How do you think that should affect your efforts to live a life that pleases God?
- What makes our tendencies towards legalism (Trying to earn God’s acceptance thru our own obedience) so troublesome in our walk?
- What’s the one thing (and it ain’t good) that we contribute to our justification?
- As a believer have you had any moments, days or seasons where you felt like you fell out of favor with God? How did that affect you and how does the Doctrine of Justification fight that?
- Lester talked about “Learning and Remembering” as disciples. How do those go together and why are they so important?

REVIEW

- Read: First Steps of Faith Chapter 5

HOMEWORK!!! ...Because the deepest part of your discipleship is personal!!

- Read: First Steps of Faith Chapter 6