

seminal passage from Romans on justification, Paul points to the words of Psalmist - David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

Romans 4:6-8

#### Discussion Questions

- What is unique about the Christian doctrine of justification by faith? How does this differ from Rome's teaching, or teaching of other religions?

#### **Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse**

Have you ever climbed a mountain before? It lots of hard work, and if you persevere to the end, you're rewarded with a view. You may say, the harder the climb, the more you enjoy the view. The doctrine of justification could be likened to the Mount Everest of doctrines. It takes us to the very heavens where we are walking in the heights of God's expansive grace. When we step back and look, the view is a stunning landscape of the glories of Christ as far as the eye can see. This doctrine is the very heart of the gospel itself. This precious and glorious truth contains the only hope of forgiveness for the sinner. It shows us that, in addition to being pardoned for our sins, which are very great and very grave, we also receive all the benefits of Christ's righteousness, credited to our account. This accounting is far from a cold or and legal reality, but a demonstration of God's compassionate love for sinners, who become beloved by God for Christ's sake. Let us close with two final scriptures that sum up the hope held out to us in justification: *By the obedience of one, many are made righteous*, Romans 5:19 and finally, *God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, Romans 3:25.

#### Discussion Questions

- Thinking back over the ideas we covered – forgiveness, imputation, and faith alone as the instrument of justification, what has stirred you the most?
- Spend time as a family thanking God for the mercies of justification we have through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# Baptist Catechism Family Worship Guide



## West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

### Baptist Catechism Question #36

Q: What is justification?

*A: Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*

#### Suggested Memory Verse

Romans 3:23–24 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... (ESV)

## Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

The first thing that the answer to this week’s catechism question tells us about justification, is that it is an act of God. This is the best possible news a sinner could hear! You see, there is nothing at all that we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God, for *all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment*, Isaiah 64:6. But, God is merciful, and the answer to our catechism question tells us that justification is also an act of free grace. Justification is given to us freely by God, a wonderful and merciful act of forgiveness. God declares to those who he justifies *I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more*, Hebrews 8:12. Job, when considering how he may be justified before God said *how can a man be justified before God? If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times*. It is true, that man could never be justified by his works before God. If we had to account for one of a thousand of our sinful thoughts or deeds we would be condemned and would be without excuse. And if we tried to point to our good works in order to be justified, we also would surely be condemned *For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, and all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*, Galatians 2:16 and Romans 3:23.

### Discussion Question

- Why is it important that we understand that justification is an act of God?
- Before you heard about the doctrine of justification, how did you believe you could be made right with God?

## Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Yesterday we looked at the fact that we can have hope because God, through a gracious act, justifies those who belong to Jesus Christ. Should we try to be justified by our good works or by avoiding sin, we could not stand before God on the day of judgement. But the good news of justification is that in it, God pardons all our sins. *For we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, Romans 3:24. Though we have sinned, and will not have final victory over remaining sin until the day that we die, the heart of justification lies in the act of God graciously forgiving us. The forgiveness that God offers us is *in Christ*. God doesn’t simply pretend like we are not guilty before him. Have you ever played a game with a toddler, like hide and seek? They usually aren’t very good at hiding, so to make the game more interesting, you pretend not to see them. This is not at all how God deals with our sin. God punishes sin and punishes it severely. When Jesus was crucified, God was pouring out the wrath and punishment for sin. This was a punishment that you and I deserve, but instead God put the punishment on his son. That is why Paul says *We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins*, Ephesians 1:7. You see God doesn’t wink at sin. No secret deed or thought goes unnoticed by our God who is a judge and sees all. Our only hope is to trust in the forgiveness that God graciously provides for us in Jesus Christ.

### Discussion Questions

- What does the forgiveness of your sins mean to you?
- What encourage might you give to a brother or sister who is struggling with ongoing sin in their lives?

## Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

One of the great mysteries of the Christian faith is the fact that God imputes Christ’s righteousness to sinful man. The original language of the New Testament uses a word for the idea of imputation that you could translate as “credit.” The idea it conveys is that God credit’s Christ’s righteousness to our account. What would you do if one day you woke up and you checked your account balance at your bank and found out you had million dollars? After you picked yourself up off the floor, you would think to yourself “there must be some kind of mistake!” How much more should we think of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ? Not only does justification provide a clean slate through the forgiveness of sins but it also gives us positively the righteousness of Jesus Christ himself. Isaiah, looking forward to the imputation of Christ, wrote *Though your sins have been as scarlet they shall be as white as snow*, Isaiah 1:18. Sometimes we think of what Christ has done in legal or banking terms and we can get the idea that God justifying is a transaction or an emotionless statement of fact. But listen to how Paul speaks of the result of justification: *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, Ephesians 1:6. And Solomon, in a figurative way speaks of how God sees us because of the imputation of Christ - *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee*, Song of Solomon 4:7

### Discussion Questions

- In your own words describe what it means to have something imputed.
- Why is important that justification provides more than just bare forgiveness for past sins?

## Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Paul opens his letter to the Corinthians with thanksgiving for the grace they had received, being justified by God. *I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus* 1 Corinthians 1:4. One of the most wonderful aspects of justification is that is received by faith, alone. God has given grace, and we receive this gift by faith. Paul says in Romans, *Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith*. Romans 3:27 Because we receive the gift of justification, no one may boast before God as if he had somehow deserved or played a part in his or her justification. We should join the apostle in giving thanks to God because of the grace we have received in Jesus Christ, and we ought to remember that faith alone is how we receive this gift. As we noted on Day 1, there is no way that anyone can earn justification. The only thing that we have earned is death because of our sin against a most holy God. In the