

Biblical Theology

Unit 5: Doctrine of Salvation – Lesson 4: Union and Justification

Justification

- Definition: Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he 1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, 2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.

1. Justification is a legal declaration of the forgiveness of sins past, present and future.

- **Romans 8:1** - there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,
- **Romans 8:33-34** - Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
- **Psalm 103:12** - as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

2. Justification is the imputation of Christ's righteousness believers.

- **Romans 3:21-22** - But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,
- **Romans 5:17** - For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus!
- **1 Corinthians 1:30** - It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

3. Justification is God's response to believers' faith.

- **Romans 3:26** - he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.
- **Romans 5:1** - Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- **Galatians 2:16** - know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

4. Justification is a result of God's grace, not human merit.

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.
- **Galatians 2:16** - know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Union with Christ

- Definition: Faith in Christ results in a oneness between the believer and Christ which the Scripture describe as a union.

1. Union with Christ is Christ in the believer.

- **Colossians 1:27** - To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- **Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2. **Union with Christ is the believer in Christ.**

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
- **Ephesians 1:3-4** - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16** - For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

3. **Union with Christ is judicial.**

- **Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- **Romans 6:4-6** - We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

4. **Union with Christ is spiritual.**

- **Romans 8:9-10** - You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.
- **1 Corinthians 12:13** - For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

5. **Union with Christ is reciprocal.**

- **Romans 8:17** - Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
- **Colossians 3:1** - Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** - God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Are you confident that you have been declared “not guilty” forever in God’s sight?
2. Why is it so important to understand that God went beyond forgiving our sins and also imputed Christ’s righteousness to us?
3. How does our union with Christ play such a crucial role in our justification before God?

Reading Assignment

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 37: Adoption