

ARE YOU JUSTIFIED?

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READER, the question before your eyes is one of the utmost importance. It lies at the root of all peace and happiness in religion. You have probably heard that a true Christian has peace with God. But do you know the fountain from which that peace springs? Do you understand the reason why a true Christian feels that he and God are friends? Let me try to unfold the matter to you. Believe me, it deserves your best attention.

The peace of the true Christian arises from his justification before God. It is not a vague, dreamy feeling, without reason and foundation. He can show cause for it. He builds upon solid ground. He has peace with God, because he is *justified*. He is reckoned righteous in God's sight. His sins are no longer imputed to him, but laid on Christ. Christ's perfect righteousness is laid on him, and covers him from head to foot. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Without this justification it is impossible to have real peace. Conscience forbids it. Sin is a mountain between a man and God, and must be taken away. The sense of guilt lies heavy on the heart, and must be removed. Unpardoned sin will murder peace. The true Christian knows all this well. His peace arises from a consciousness of his sins being forgiven for Christ's sake, and his guilt being cleansed away by Christ's blood. His house is not built on sandy ground. His well is not a broken cistern, which can hold no water. He has peace with God, because he is justified.

He is justified by faith in Christ, and his sins are *forgiven*. However many, and however great, they are cleansed away, pardoned, and wiped out. They are blotted out of the book of God's remembrance. They are sunk into the depths of the sea. They are cast behind God's back. They are searched for and not found. They are remembered no more. Though they may have been like scarlet, they are become white as snow. Though they may have been red like crimson, they are as wool. And so he has peace, being justified.

He is justified by faith in Christ, and *counted righteous* in God's sight. The Father sees no spot in him, and reckons him innocent. He is clothed in a robe of perfect righteousness, and may sit down by the side of angels without feeling ashamed. The holy law of God, which touches the thoughts and intents of men's hearts, cannot condemn him. The devil, the accuser of the brethren, can lay nothing to his charge to pre-

vent his full acquittal. Christ intercedes for him, and so he has peace, being justified.

Is he not naturally a poor, weak, erring, defective *sinner*? He is. None knows that better than he does himself. But notwithstanding this, he is reckoned complete, perfect, and faultless before God. Christ has suffered for him, and so he is justified.

Is he not naturally a *debtor*? He is. None feels that more deeply than he does himself. He owes ten thousand talents, and has nothing of his own to pay. But his debts are all paid, settled, and crossed out forever. Christ has paid his debts, and so he is justified.

Is he not naturally liable to the curse of a *broken law*? He is. None would confess that more readily than he would himself. But the demands of the law have been fully satisfied,—the claims of justice have been met to the last tittle. Christ has redeemed him from the curse of the law. Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth. He believes, and so he is justified.

Does he not naturally deserve *punishment*? He does. None would acknowledge that more fully than he would himself. But the punishment has been borne. The wrath of God against sin has been made manifest. Yet he has escaped. The Father has laid on Christ his iniquity, and so he is justified.

Reader, do you know anything of all this? Are you justified? Do you feel as if you were pardoned, forgiven, and accepted before God? Can you draw near to him with boldness, and say, "Thou art my Father and my Friend, and I am thy reconciled child?" Oh! believe me, you will never taste true peace until you are justified.

Where are your sins? Are they removed and taken away from off your soul? Have they been reckoned for, and accounted for, in God's presence? Oh! be very sure these questions are of the most solemn importance. A peace of conscience not built on justification, is a perilous dream. From such a peace the Lord deliver you!

Reader, once more I ask you the question, are you justified? You will not wonder that I call it a question of the utmost importance. You will not wonder that I earnestly press it on your attention. Sit down this day, and consider seriously what answer you can give. Time flies. Life is uncertain. Death will come, judgment is sure. Christ waits to receive and justify you, but He will not wait forever. Reader, are you justified? Awake! Repent! Believe! You may be justified this very day.

An hour lost in the morning of a short day is a great loss; such is the loss of youth.