

Jesus Walks Among the Lampstands

Closing Thoughts

Part B

Lesson #24

Professors are divided
into two categories.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q 33: What is justification?

A 33: Justification is the act of God's free grace by which he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight. He does so only because he counts the righteousness of Christ as ours. Justification is received by faith alone.

Romans 3:19-25

“¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. ²¹ But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

²² even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.”

Justification is a legal act of God by
which He declares the sinner
righteous on the basis of the perfected
righteousness of Jesus Christ

The negative element of justification is the forgiveness of sins on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The pardon granted in justification applies to all sins, past, present, and future, and therefore includes the removal of all guilt and of every penalty. The negative consequence of sin is removed.

Romans 8:1, 32-35

“¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

“³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

Hebrews 10:11-18

“¹¹ And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And upon their mind I will write them,’

He then says,

¹⁷ ‘And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’

¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.”

Matthew 6:12

“¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our
debtors.”

Psalm 32:5

“⁵ I acknowledged my sin to Thee,
And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, ‘I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord’;
And Thou did forgive the guilt of my sin.”

Psalm 130:3-4

“³ If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
⁴ But there is forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared.”

The Positive Element
involves two parts.

Adopted as His children

In justification God adopts the believer as His child, that is, places him in the position of a child and gives him all the rights of a child.

John 1:12-13

“¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Romans 8:15-16

“¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Ephesians 1:4-5

“⁴ Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.”

Galatians 4:5-6

“⁵ In order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

The title to eternal life

Having been adopted, the believer is invested in all the legal rights of children to become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:17

“¹⁷ And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

I Peter 1:4

“⁴ To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

God and not man is the author of sanctification. This does not mean, however, that man is entirely passive in the process. He can and should cooperate with God in the work of sanctification by a diligent use of the means which God has placed at his disposal.

II Corinthians 7:1

“¹ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Colossians 3:5-10

“⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶ For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.”

I Peter 1:22

“²² Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.”

Note extremes between
moralism and
antinomianism.

The question is over how sanctified one might be in this life. The answer to the question is found in the difference between “ought” and “can”.

I John 1:8-2:2

“⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. ^{2:1} My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

Philippians 3:21

“²¹ Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

Hebrews 12:23

“²³ To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.”

Revelation 14:5

“⁵ And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.”

Revelation 21:27

“²⁷ And nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”