

BIBLICAL PULPIT ADDRESS

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

A message of grace, peace, and assurance in the finished work
of Jesus Christ

A message for believers, church members, and those who are still seeking to
understand the gospel

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:1 - US English rendering

Personalized by
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Before We Begin

This address was prepared to be read or preached in a natural voice. It preserves the doctrinal foundation of the Bible study Justified by Faith, while presenting it in a warm, understandable, and pastoral manner. The pauses, questions, and repetitions are intentional: they help the truth to be not only understood, but received in the heart.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Grace is the root; Christ is the foundation; faith is the means; justification is the verdict; peace and life are the result; and good works are the fruit, for the glory of God.

Bibliographic references: the Holy Bible and Francisco Lacueva's Greek-Spanish Interlinear New Testament. Observations from the Greek support the reading of the passage, but never replace its full biblical context.

Justified by Faith

Opening: a word for every person

Beloved brothers and sisters, dear friends, and those listening today who do not yet consider themselves believers: I invite you to pause for a moment amid the noise of life, the worries, and that inner voice that so often accuses us. Let us open our hearts to one of the most glorious truths of the gospel: God justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus Christ.

Perhaps someone came thinking, “I am not worthy.” Another may be remembering failures that no one else knows. Perhaps someone has spent years trying to earn God's favor, as though spiritual life were an endless staircase and every good deed only moved us up one step. If that is you, listen carefully: the gospel does not announce what you must pay; it announces what Christ has already paid.

The Word of God does not invite us to hide our guilt or disguise our condition. It speaks truthfully. Yet the same Word that exposes sin presents the Savior. First it leaves us without excuses; then it shows us immeasurable grace.

“We conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.”

Romans 3:28 - sense of the Greek text

This is not a secondary statement. It stands at the heart of the apostolic proclamation. To be justified means that God, the righteous Judge, pronounces a favorable verdict over the person who is united to Christ by faith. It does not say that we never sinned or that our effort made us morally perfect. It declares that Christ bore our guilt and that, in him, we are accepted as righteous.

1. The problem none of us can solve

To understand the greatness of justification, we must first accept God's diagnosis. Scripture says that all have sinned. All: the religious and the indifferent; those raised in a believing family and those only beginning to seek God; those with a respected reputation and those carrying a visible history of failure.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3:23 - US English rendering

We often compare ourselves with one another. We say, “I am not as bad as that person,” or, “I have done more good than harm.” But God does not compare us with our neighbor. He shows us his own holiness. Before that holiness every mouth is stopped. No argument, record, or religious résumé can erase guilt.

God's law is holy and good. It teaches what is right, reveals God's character, and exposes sin. Yet it can point to the wound without becoming the medicine; it can show the debt without paying it; it can tell us that we broke the command without making the lawbreaker innocent.

Think of a mirror. A mirror can show that our face is stained, but it cannot wash us. It would be foolish to scrub our face with the mirror. In the same way, the law reveals our need, but directs us away from ourselves and toward Christ.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

The question is not, “Have I managed to become better than others?” The question is, “Where will I find the righteousness I need before a holy God?”

2. God did for us what we could not do

Here we meet the words that change the whole story: “But now.” After proving that all are guilty, Paul announces that the righteousness of God has been revealed apart from the law. It did not arise from human effort. It came from God, was promised by the prophets, and was fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

God did not overlook sin as though it did not matter. If he had, he would not be just. At the cross, justice and love met. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived without sin, willingly took our place, bore our guilt, shed his blood, and died for our sins. On the third day, he rose again.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 3:24 - US English rendering

Notice those words: freely, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Free for us does not mean cheap. It is offered to us as a gift; it cost Christ the cross. Salvation cannot be purchased with money, penance, promises, or years of service. It was secured by the precious blood of the Lamb.

Isaiah had announced the Servant who would bear the iniquities of many. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Paul summarized the gospel by declaring that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again according to the Scriptures. The foundation of our acceptance is not our changing performance, but the finished work of Jesus Christ.

When conscience accuses you, do not present God with a list of merits. Present Christ. When the past returns to your memory, remember the cross. When your faith feels small, look at the greatness of the Savior. Assurance does not rest on the strength of the receiving hand, but on the faithfulness of the One who holds us.

3. Faith: the empty hand that receives the gift

What place, then, does faith have? Faith is not the price of salvation. It is not a more refined work with which we purchase God's favor. Faith is the empty hand that receives the gift. It is turning from confidence in our own righteousness and resting in Jesus Christ.

Believing is more than admitting that Jesus existed. The facts of the gospel call for personal trust. Faith says, "Lord, I have no other refuge. I cannot save myself. I believe that you died for my sins and rose again. I rest in your promise."

Repentance and faith are not rivals. Repentance describes the turning: I acknowledge my sin, abandon self-reliance, and turn to God. Faith describes the resting: I place my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. I turn from sin and self, and I turn toward Christ.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."

Acts 16:31 - US English rendering

Remember the tax collector in Jesus' parable. The Pharisee presented his record, his practices, and his comparison with others. The tax collector would not even lift his eyes; he admitted his need and asked for mercy. Jesus said that this man went home justified. Not because his sin was small, but because he stopped justifying himself and entrusted himself to God's mercy.

Remember also the thief on the cross. He had no time to build a new reputation or accumulate religious works. He acknowledged his guilt, recognized who Jesus was, and entrusted himself to him. The Lord answered with an immediate promise. There we see grace without decoration: a sinner without merit and an entirely sufficient Savior.

4. Abraham: a promise received, not wages earned

Long before the law of Moses, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Romans 4 uses this example to show the difference between wages and grace. When someone works and receives pay, that payment is a debt, not a gift. Justification, however, is not wages for religious service. God justifies the ungodly person who believes.

The Greek word translated “count” or “credit” -logizomai- communicates the idea of placing something on an account. Abraham did not present a perfect righteousness manufactured by himself. He trusted God's promise, and God credited righteousness to him. His later obedience demonstrated that his faith was real, but that obedience did not purchase the verdict.

David described the blessedness of the person whose sins are forgiven and to whom God credits righteousness apart from works. The believer does not spend life trying to turn a gift into wages. The believer lives in gratitude for receiving what could never have been earned.

5. Peace with God: the verdict that changes our standing

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:1 - US English rendering

The peace of Romans 5 is more than a calm emotion. It is an objective reality: the judicial hostility has ended. The guilty person who was far away has been reconciled and now has access to grace and hope of the glory of God.

Our emotions change. Some days bring joy; on other days we move forward through tears. But God's verdict does not rise and fall with our mood. If justification depended on the intensity of our feelings, we would never rest. Thanks be to God, it depends on Christ.

Romans 8 brings this assurance to its climax: there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Then it asks: if God is the One who justifies, who can bring a charge? Christ died, rose again, and intercedes for us.

TRUTH TO AFFIRM

My security does not rest on the claim that I can never fail. It rests on the truth that Christ never fails: he died, rose again, and intercedes for his own.

This does not make us careless; it makes us grateful. We do not obey in terror, trying to convince God finally to love us. We obey because, in

Christ, we have been loved and accepted. We do not work to enter the family; we serve because we have been received as children.

6. Not by works; created for good works

Here we must preserve the balance of Scripture. The Bible excludes works as the cause of our justification, but affirms them as the fruit of living faith. Ephesians says that we are saved by grace through faith, not by works; then immediately adds that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Works are not the root of the tree; they are its fruit. A tree is not alive because fruit has been tied to its branches. It bears fruit because life is within it. In the same way, works do not produce new life. New life, created by God, begins to produce love, obedience, service, generosity, and holiness.

Paul protects the free character of the gospel: no one can be justified by works of the law. James protects the authenticity of our profession: faith that exists only in words, without mercy or obedience, is dead. They do not contradict each other; they answer different questions.

Paul asks, "How is a guilty person accepted before God?" The answer: by grace, through faith, apart from works. James asks, "What value is there in saying that one believes when life shows no reality?" The answer: a fruitless profession does not demonstrate living faith.

Abraham believed the promise in Genesis 15. Many years later, in Genesis 22, his obedience made that faith visible and mature. The later work did not create faith retroactively; it revealed it. We are justified by faith, but the faith that justifies does not wish to remain barren.

7. The grace that saves also teaches

Some fear that preaching grace clearly will lead to careless living. Paul faced that objection: "Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound?" His answer is firm: certainly not. The believer has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection and has received a new identity.

Grace does more than forgive; it also trains. Titus teaches that saving grace instructs us to reject ungodliness and to live soberly, righteously, and reverently while we wait for our Savior. The Holy Spirit who seals the believer also sanctifies and produces his fruit.

When we fall, we do not return to a system of merit. We confess sin, look again to Christ, receive the Father's correction, and continue walking. The Father's discipline does not mean he ceased to be Father; it confirms that he treats us as children. Grace does not minimize sin: it frees us from sin's condemnation and begins to break its dominion.

Christian holiness therefore grows from an identity already received. We do not say, "I will perform good works so that God may perhaps justify me." We say, "God justified me by grace in Christ; now I want to live for the One who died and rose again for me."

8. The gifts that accompany justification

When God justifies, he does not give an empty word. In Christ come real blessings: complete forgiveness, peace with God, access to grace, no condemnation, eternal life, adoption, inheritance, the seal of the Spirit, and hope of glory.

Forgiveness answers our guilt: the debt has been removed. Justification answers our standing: we are counted righteous in relation to Christ. Reconciliation answers our hostility: we have been brought near. Adoption answers our orphaned condition: we are received as children. The seal of the Spirit answers our insecurity: God himself guarantees the promised inheritance.

"Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has
eternal life and will not come into condemnation."

John 5:24 - US English rendering

Notice the tenses: has eternal life; will not come into condemnation; has passed from death into life. Christ is not describing a distant possibility for someone who may eventually gather enough merit. He speaks of a present possession and a transition accomplished for the person who hears and believes.

First John says that these things were written so that those who believe in the name of the Son of God may know that they have eternal life. Christian assurance is not arrogance when it rests on God's promise. Arrogance would be trusting our own righteousness; humility is believing what God has said about his Son.

9. A word for anyone still trying to justify himself or herself

Let me speak directly to the heart. Perhaps you know the passages, participate in church life, and try to do good, yet deep within you are still bargaining with God. When you feel you behaved well, you approach with confidence. When you know you failed, you think you must hide until you recover some merit.

That cycle is exhausting because it fixes the eyes on self. The gospel invites us to look outside ourselves, to Christ. His sacrifice needs no supplement. His righteousness does not need ours added to it. His resurrection confirms that the work was accepted.

Philippians 3 shows Paul setting aside his religious credentials so that he might be found in Christ, not possessing a righteousness of his own from the law, but the righteousness that comes from God through faith. If the apostle did not rest in his achievements, neither will we find peace in ours.

INVITATION

Stop presenting your own record as the basis of acceptance. Come with empty hands. Christ is sufficient to save completely those who draw near to God through him.

10. Confession of faith and final invitation

Beloved, the doctrine of justification by faith was not given to remain in a chart, a library, or a theological debate. It was given so that the guilty may find forgiveness, the weary may find rest, the fearful may find assurance, and the believer may find a new reason to live in gratitude.

If you have trusted Christ, do not put back on the chains he broke. Do not live as though you must purchase your acceptance again every day. Remember who you are in Christ. Draw near to the throne of grace. Confess your sins. Receive the Father's correction. Walk in the good works God prepared, not to earn a place, but because you have already been received in the Beloved.

And if you have not yet truly rested in Jesus Christ, you may turn to God today. Do not wait until you feel worthy. Christ came precisely for sinners. Acknowledge your need, abandon confidence in yourself, and

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. His promise is true.

DOCTRINAL CONFESSION

I do not trust my own righteousness or the number of my works. I trust Jesus Christ, who died for my sins and rose again. God justifies by grace the person who believes. I receive his forgiveness, rest in his promise, and desire to walk in the good works he prepared.

Conclusion

Let us return to the central statement. Grace is the root: everything begins in God's merciful initiative. Christ is the foundation: his perfect life, shed blood, and resurrection. Faith is the means: the empty hand that receives. Justification is the verdict: God declares the believer righteous in relation to Christ. Peace and life are the result. Good works are the fruit, for the glory of God.

We have nothing in ourselves about which to boast, but we have every reason to worship. We cannot point to our merits, but we can point to the cross. We cannot say that we saved ourselves, but we can joyfully proclaim that Jesus Christ saves.

“By grace you have been saved through faith... not by works... For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”

Ephesians 2:8-10 - US English rendering

May this truth quiet our conscience, humble our pride, kindle our gratitude, and strengthen our hope. We are justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. To him be all the glory. Amen.

Suggested closing prayer

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we have no righteousness of our own sufficient to stand before you. We thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again. Thank you for freely justifying by your grace the person who believes. Help us to rest in Christ's finished work, to live without boasting, and to walk in the good works you prepared. May your Spirit produce love, obedience, and steadfast hope within us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Brief Guide for Oral Delivery

- Opening: present the human burden of trying to earn acceptance. Read Romans 5:1.
- Need: explain Romans 3:23 and use the mirror illustration: it reveals, but cannot cleanse.
- Work of Christ: emphasize that salvation is free to us, but it cost the cross.
- Response: define faith as personal trust and the empty hand that receives.
- Assurance: proclaim peace with God, no condemnation, and present eternal life.
- Fruit: clearly distinguish root and fruit: not by works, but for good works.
- Invitation: call every listener to abandon self-righteousness and rest in Christ.

SPEAKING TIME

Estimated speaking time: 35 to 45 minutes. It may extend to 45-50 minutes when the Scripture passages are read in full, reflective pauses are included, or the final invitation is followed by prayer.

Sources Consulted

- The Holy Bible. Biblical references follow the source study based on the Reina-Valera 1960.
- Lacueva Lafarga, Francisco. Greek-Spanish Interlinear New Testament. Editorial CLIE.
- Source study: Justified by Faith - A Concise Bible Study. Compilation and editorial presentation by Ruperto Bravo Benavente (R.B.B.), 2026.