

The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 49

December 1, 2024

SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

Physical Address:
1327 Spring Cypress Rd.
Spring, TX 77373

Mailing Address:
25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, TX 77373

Office: 281-353-2707

springcoc@gmail.com
www.churchesofchrist.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

JUSTIFICATION

J. Noel Merideth

Five terms indicative of the Christian's state are: justified, pardoned, sanctified, adopted, saved. Alexander Campbell makes these excellent remarks on these five terms:

These predicates are but so many counterpart aspects of a new state in reference to an old one; or they represent the gospel as affecting the position of man in the universe in all those points in which sin affected him. ... Sin, then, condemns, pollutes, alienates, and destroys its subjects. Grace justifies, sanctifies, adopts, and saves its subjects in reference to these points. Pardon has respect to guilt; justification, to condemnation; sanctification, to pollution; adoption, to alienation; and salvation, to destruction (*The Christian System*, Gospel Advocate Co., p. 46).

We will examine justification in this study.

The words *justify*, *justification*, *righteous*, *righteousness*, *just*, *right*, are all translations of the same Greek root. The verb justify is *dikaioo*, the noun righteousness, *dikaioosune*, the adjective righteous, *dikaios*. This means that all these words have a general meaning that is common to all of them, even though their individual meaning may differ slightly (Kenneth Wuest, *Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 36). Moses Lard defines the root *dikaio*: "to acquit or remit guilt, and then to hold and treat as just" (*A Commentary on Romans*, Gospel Light Pub. Co., p. 36). Joseph Henry Thayer defines *dikaioo*:

To judge, declare, pronounce, righteous and therefore acceptable. ... Especially is it so used, in the technical phraseology of Paul, respecting God who judges and declares such men as put faith in Christ to be righteous and acceptable to him, and accordingly fit to receive the pardon of their sins and eternal life (*Greek-English Lexicon*, American Book Co., p. 150.)

Justification then denotes the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ.

Sin is black, bleak, ugly, dirty and damning. **"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Rom. 6:23; 2 The. 1:7-9). Since **"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23), all who are accountable need a righteousness of God or justification (Rom. 3:21-30).

(1) Justification is not by works of the Law of Moses. The Jews and Judaizing Christians supposed that they secured the favor of God by works conformed to the requirements of the Mosaic law, as if by way of merit; and that they would thus attain to eternal salvation. But this law demands perfect obedience to all its precepts, and threatens condemnation to those who do not render such obedience. (Gal. 3:10,12). Obedience of this kind no one has rendered (Rom. 3:10), neither Jews nor Gentiles (Rom. 1:24-2:1). Paul declares, **"Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin"** (Rom. 3:20). Again, **"Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus,**

that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

(2) **Justification is by the Grace of God.** Since salvation solely by merit could not be obtained by the law of Moses, for no one could keep it perfectly, God sent Christ in His grace to provide a perfect scheme of redemption. **“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”** (Rom. 3:24); **“that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”** (Tit. 3:7). This denotes the *source* of our justification. Justification thus originates in the heart of God. It was His grace or unmerited favor, that led Him to provide it for helpless man. He was under no obligation whatever to do it. In His grace He had regard to our guilt, and in His mercy to our misery. Two stanzas from “Amazing Grace” express the thought beautifully:

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I’m found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Thru many dangers toils and snares,
I have already come;
’Twas grace that bro’t me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

(3) **Justification is by the Blood of Christ.** This sets forth the *ground* of our justification. Romans 5:9 says: **“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.”** **“And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission”** (Heb. 9:22). Christ has borne the punishment of our sins in His own body and with His precious blood He remitted the penalty and restores us to the favor of His Father by His expiatory death.

(4) **Justification is by Faith.** Many scriptures state the fact that justification is by faith. Romans 3:26-30, says it twice: in verse 26, God is said to be **“the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus”** and in verse 28 we read thus: **“We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.”** Romans 5:1, says: **“Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (See Gal 2:16; Acts 13:38-39; Gal. 3:8,24-27). Faith is the *condition* of our justification, not the meritorious ground of it. It is not “for” faith that we are justified, but “by” faith. Faith is not the price of justification, but the means of appropriating it. Of course this faith is saving faith, i.e., a faith that is full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah, conjoined with

obedience to Christ (Thayer, p. 511; Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Gal. 5:6; Jam. 2:20ff). This obedient faith includes repentance, confession, and baptism. But someone may ask: Is not baptism a work and therefore not necessary for salvation else salvation would be by works? The authors Lipscomb and Shepherd have answered this critical question for us quite well:

Now the Scriptures everywhere teach that man will be lost following his own righteousness, but that he will be saved by and because he walks in the works God has ordained to make him righteous. Jesus said to John the Baptist that “it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness” (Mat. 3:15)—true righteousness, that of God, he means. Jesus thus declares that baptism is a part of God’s righteousness; and in submitting to it, man submits to the righteousness of God. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit tells us: “Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5). The washing of, or connected, with, the regeneration in the new institution is baptism, as the whole religious world has decided. So baptism is again declared to be not of the self-righteousness which we obtain by doing our own deeds, but it is a means in connection with the renewing of the Holy Spirit, by which we are saved (*Salvation From Sin*, Gospel Advocate Co., p. 204).

Furthermore, Galatians 3:26, 27, tells us how sons of God are made by faith. Paul said, **“Ye are,”** (present tense) **“all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”** But notice the change in tense in the next verse, or verse 27. **“For as many of you as were”** (past tense) **“baptized into Christ have put on Christ”** (ASV). The only way that it can be said that you are in Christ, present tense, is for it also to be said of you in the past tense that you were baptized (Guy N. Woods, *Sermons on Salvation*, R. B. Sweet Co., p. 82.) We cannot boast about our faith or baptism into Christ, this does not earn or pay for salvation, it is only the means of appropriating the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ.

(5) **The Results of Justification.** There is the remission of the penalty (Rom. 4:7, 8; 2 Cor. 5:19); the condemnation is gone (Rom. 8:1, 33, 34); there is peace with God (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-17); there is restoration to God’s favor (Rom. 4:6; 2 Cor. 5:21); and, there is heirship (Tit. 3:7). There is also a direct result in practical Christian living for God (Phi. 1:11).~

Deceased

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.churchesofchrist.com

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE

Gus Nichols

It seems that religious indifference is becoming more general than ever before. The Pentecostians were so interested in the first full gospel discourse that all who did not mock cried out to know what to do to be saved (Acts 2:14-38). Those receiving the word “**gladly**” accepted it (Acts 2:41). It seemed that none were indifferent toward the truth. All took a stand, either for or against the gospel. Saul of Tarsus was not indifferent. Before he heard and accepted the truth he took a stand against it and “**persecuted the church,**” and tried to destroy the faith from the earth (Gal. 1:13, 14; 1 Tim. 1:13). He was never neutral. Cornelius was not neutral. Even before his conversion he was standing for what he believed, living up to all the light he had (Acts 10). Throughout the Acts of the Apostles the people were either for or against the gospel of Christ. This was the rule, even though there were many exceptions.

NOW INDIFFERENT

But now the masses seem to be almost wholly indifferent toward the true gospel. They are neither for nor against it. They have embraced the neutral position of Doctor Gamaliel, a Pharisee; who said:

Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God (Acts 5:38, 39).

This man was an exception to the rule, as may be seen in the fact that he had to win his point in favor of tolerance by argument. Now his idea seems to prevail, and the masses take no stand with reference to Christianity. They feel no obligation to oppose it nor to support it. Their philosophy is to “let it alone.”

EVEN IN THE CHURCH

Even members of the true church follow this old philosophy. They let the church alone about as if they were outsiders. They are indifferent, being neither “**cold nor hot**”—only “**lukewarm,**” as was the church at Laodicea. This was the only church of the seven in Asia Minor—charged with holding this attitude. But such is now very general, or is apparently so. They do not fight the church, neither do they work for its progress. They want to let it alone, and to be let alone. They feel the need of nothing. And they seem not to be aware of the fact that they are lost, unless they repent, the same as an outsider (Rev. 3:14-19). Many do not care what the Bible teaches. They are too indifferent to read it, or to hear the truth preached. They do not care whether the gospel is ever preached unto the lost or not. Sin

in the church causes them no worry. They do not care whether leaders are trained and young preachers developed or the cause goes down in shame and reproach.

SOME CAUSES OF INDIFFERENCE

Denominational divisions and parties are making infidels—causing unbelief, even as Jesus knew they would (John 17:20, 21). The Lord knew “the world” would not believe in him, unless His disciples were “one.” Such parties have taken the position that the Bible teaches about everything. If you doubt this charge, ask them if their church with its doctrines is the only one that is right, and they will say: “No, I am not so narrow as to think all churches and doctrines are wrong except mine.” They do not object to any of us preaching what we believe the Bible to *positively* teach, so long as we do *not* teach that others are wrong, even when they contradict what we teach. The general indifference is such that they say: “Preach what you please, but do not fight other churches.” They have accepted as final the idea that the Bible teaches all doctrines and endorses all churches, and they do not want to hear another church, “just as scriptural,” opposed. Since everything is all right, and one is sure to be saved just so he is religious, as they think, they are naturally indifferent as to what the Bible really does teach. They are even prejudiced against any new study of such matters. Many of them have gone into some church to accept what it teaches, and to hate all who may try to bring them to a knowledge of God “**more perfectly.**” Such people, they are taught to believe, are meddlers with other men’s matters, and should tend to their own crowd, preach the gospel, and let others alone. Now, how could Satan have gotten in his deadly work more effectively? How could he have blocked the way of truth more effectively than to have thus closed the avenues of further knowledge? This binds the masses to the ignorance of the Dark Ages.

MODERNISM A DEADLY POISON

Modernism has been injected into the blood stream of this generation, and the masses do not have enough faith in the Bible to care a straw about what it says. Human wisdom is the standard instead of the Bible. What the masses are *doing* has more weight than what the Bible says. “**Science falsely so called**” is the final word. They think the Bible has been demonstrated to be thousands of years out of date, when in fact it is thousands of years ahead of date. The saddest thing about the whole affair is the fact that many so-called, “gospel preachers” are preaching little sermonettes picked up secondhand from sectarian preachers, and do

not seem to know of the disease so much needing treatment.

THE ONLY REMEDY

There is only one remedy, and that is the ancient gospel, preached in all its condemning and saving power. There is no other power to save the world (Rom. 1:16). When this fails, all has failed. There is no place for experimenting with something else. All such is an insult to Almighty God. To preach the full and complete gospel, in all its facts, threats, commands, and promises, will get results, or there can be nothing done about the matter. Compromising to please those who have made an unwritten law against preaching the whole truth cannot save anyone. The mighty tide of worldliness and unbelief cannot be checked by joining the ranks of the enemy. To all intents and purposes, this is done when the truth is kept back and only matters of agreement stressed. We need plain gospel preaching, done with courtesy and in love—love of the people and the truth. We must have more “mission” work done, at home and abroad. We must train more and better teachers. More and better literature must be distributed. We must take advantage of all means of propagating the truth. Every member must become a private teacher, and special men trained as leaders. All of our forces must be strengthened, and the ranks replenished all along the line. All must be **“set for the defence of the gospel”** (Phi. 1:17; Jude 3). The worship must be **“in spirit and in truth”** (John 4:24). The church must help the poor and let its light shine. Each member must live above reproach, or else be disciplined, counted as a heathen (Mat. 18:15-18; 2 The. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5). The church must be kept united and strong (Eph. 4:3). All the forces must be put to work. The work must be planned, and the plans worked. All must be friendly and zealous for good works (Tit. 2:12-14). The whole membership must make contacts, each with his friend, and bring the people to hear the pure gospel, preached in kindness and love. This has always brought whatever results God has made possible, and it will not fail now (Isa. 55:8-13). Man of God, arise, and cheerfully and with all boldness, yet humbly as the Master, drive out the things which have brought our race to such indifference! Great God, help us, let we fail!~

Deceased

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

How many times is the word *evangelist* used in the New Testament?

Answer to last week's question:
Moses; Acts 7:20

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2024

Announcements	John West
Scripture Reading	Stephen Cohn <i>Genesis 3:9-21</i>
Song Leader	Gary Blasingame
Prayer	Bret Bailey/Ken Cohn (AM) Steven Johnson/Andrew Paluka (PM)
Speaker	David Brown
Lord's Table (AM) <i>(Mark 14:22-25)</i>	
Bret Bailey	Steven Johnson
Andrew Paluka	J.D. Gunter
Lord's Table (PM)	
Jonathan West	Eric Paluka
Audio/Video Monitor	Joshua West
Camera/Door Monitor	J.D. Gunter

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024

(via Zoom Meeting)

Announcements	Eric Paluka
Speaker	Jonathan West
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown

FOR DECEMBER

Prepare Communion	West
Lock Buildings	West
Prepare Bulletin Board	West

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Barbara Perkins, Emma Gomez, April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Edith Young, Zack Nero, Debbie Brannon, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, December 8th:** Youth Holiday Party after afternoon services.
- **Friday, December 13th:** Ladies' Holiday Party at the home of Jenny Gunter.
- **Saturday, December 14th:** Holiday Hayride at the home of Ken & Nancy Cohn.