

Text— Romans 3:19-22

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Today is the Sunday after New Year, while Epiphany is this coming Thursday, January 6th. As we have begun a new year, we must admit that during the previous year we sinned in thoughts, words and deeds, for Ecclesiastes 7:20 plainly states, “there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” Therefore, it is wonderful that Jesus Christ was, as 1 John 3:5 relates, “manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” The term “Epiphany” means “manifestation and appearing”; so, on the day called Epiphany we remember the wise men from the east – Gentiles – who came to worship the Christ child who had appeared on the scene, being born King of the Jews as was prophesied.

Oh, Jesus Christ is actually King of kings and Lord of Lords, for 1 Timothy 3:16 reports in regards to Him, “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Indeed, Jesus Christ is the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles alike, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18) Note well that God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is the Savior of the world; but, only those who believe on Him are not condemned to hell when they depart this life.

Accordingly, our sermon text puts forth vital subject-matter as it emphasizes:

“BE PERSONALLY JUSTIFIED IN GOD’S SIGHT”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our

text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What it means to be personally justified in God’s sight and why it is necessary
- 2) By what means one can never be personally justified in God’s sight
- 3) By what sole means one can be personally justified in God’s sight

-1-

Our Scripture selection speaks of being *justified* in God’s sight; and then, our Scripture selection identifies such justification as having the *righteousness of God*. Hence, to be personally justified in God’s sight is to be an individual who is declared by God to be righteous and not guilty of any sin.

God demands and commands that every human being be righteous in His sight, for He says in Leviticus 19:2, “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” When God gave His Ten Commandments He said, “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not”— God never said, “just try your best and I’ll be satisfied,” or, “your hand shall not do this or your hand shall do this”; no, God said, “thou,” which means our entire person must obey His commands in thoughts, words and deeds. Thus, God demands and commands that every human being be completely righteous – holy – in His sight. Accordingly, it is truly necessary to be personally justified in God’s sight.

Now, in arrogance there are people who say things like, “why should I care what God said so many years ago? This is a modern world in which we determine our own destiny by adhering to science, education and philosophy.” To such prideful and arrogant folks, Jesus says in Matthew 10:28, “fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Yeah, people had better fear God because they will one day answer to Him, “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of

us shall give account of himself to God.” — reports Romans 14:11-12.

The Lord God states in Ezekiel 18:4 & 20, “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. ...The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Note well that death of the soul and not only death of the body awaits those who have NOT been declared by God to be righteous and not guilty of any sin. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to be personally justified in God’s sight.

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As we continue to ponder our text, let us see by what means one can never be personally justified in God’s sight.

Verse 19, ----- (Romans 3:19)

Note that God’s Law – God’s Commandments – while issued on tables of stone to the children of Israel, the Jews of old, also apply to ALL the world. Every human being is under the law, for we read in Romans 2:11-16, “there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” Hence, we see that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is responsible to God to keep His holy Law.

Nevertheless, NO naturally conceived human being can keep God’s holy Law perfectly in thoughts, words and deeds as it demands, for Psalm 53:2-3 relates, “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Furthermore, in Romans 3:9-18 we read that the apostle Paul, while chiefly addressing Jews, says, “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Thus, ALL naturally conceived human beings of all races are sinners— which certainly includes you and me.

Hence, *we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* Yeah, not one of us naturally conceived human beings can open our mouth and truthfully say that we are not a sinner, that we have kept God’s holy Law perfectly in thoughts, words and deeds. Rather, we must confess as did David in Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Accordingly, from the moment of our conception we were tainted with inherited corruption and we are thereby prone to commit all manner of actual sins, for Isaiah 64:6 informs us, “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Yes, even our finest and best

works are in themselves filthy in the sight of the high and holy God because we are all sinners who are doing the works.

Everything God's Law says to us causes our mouths to be shut before God because we stand before Him guilty of sin with nothing to brag about. Think about it. In the 1st Commandment God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3) Thus, we are to always keep the true God as our number-one love at all times in our heart and in our behavior. Who among us can honestly say that we have always done so? Not one! In the 6th Commandment God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14) Now, a man might say that he has never cheated on his wife and thereby has kept the 6th Commandment. However, Jesus says, in Matthew 5:27-28, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Common guys, the truth is that we've all lusted after women and therefore broken God's Commandment. My friends, if we were to honestly consider each of the Ten Commandments we would all have to admit that we've broken them in thought or word or deed. Consequently, God's holy Law certainly shows us that we are all sinners!

Verse 20, ----- (Romans 3:20)

God will declare no flesh and blood naturally conceived human being righteous in His sight by that person's works, because we cannot keep God's Law perfectly in thoughts, words and deeds. Rather, God's Law simply shows us our sin and convinces us we are all sinners, for Galatians 3:10 plainly states, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Think about it: even if one could keep nine out of the Ten Commandments, one would still be cursed and remain unjustified in God's sight since God commands and demands absolute perfection. So, one can never be personally justified in God's sight

by means of the works of the Law, the deeds of the Law, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

-3-

Hence, since God's Law shows us we are guilty sinners who cannot perfectly satisfy His commands in thoughts, words and deeds, it is obvious we need the Savior, Jesus Christ, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," declares Romans 10:4. Therefore, as we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see by what sole means one can be personally justified in God's sight.

Verses 21 & 22, ----- (Romans 3:21-22)

Observe that in the concluding two verses of our text the "righteousness of God" is twice mentioned, which definitely emphasizes the point that we ALL need GOD-SUPPLIED RIGHTEOUSNESS if we would be justified in His sight.

The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, plainly evident and able to be known, in the Gospel of Christ, the good-news of Jesus the Messiah foretold of old in the Law and in the Prophets— the Old Testament Holy Scriptures. Think about it. Just weeks ago we celebrated Advent and then Christmas; and, in a number of sermons, we referenced Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ. For instance, as we looked at Jeremiah 23:5-6 we noted the prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Thus, David's branch, David's descendant according to the flesh, would be and is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, the true God who supplies us with His righteousness which we need to enter heaven when we depart this life. Yes, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is our one true Savior who supplies exactly what we NEED: His own perfect righteousness, *Even the*

righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.

Indeed, there is no difference between any of us naturally conceived human beings, whether we be male or female, black or white or any shade in between, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:23-26)

Take it to heart that Jesus Christ kept God’s Law perfectly for all of us; and, Jesus paid for our lack of keeping God’s Law, for Jesus shed His holy and precious blood while nailed to the accursed tree of the cross and thereby paid for all the sins of all people, for in 1 John 2:1-2 we read, “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” It’s as Galatians 4:4-5 informs us, “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” However, although Jesus paid for all the sins of all people and kept God’s Law perfectly for all people, **ONLY THOSE** who believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord personally receive the forgiveness of sins and have Jesus’ perfect righteousness imputed to them, *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*

Now, if you look closely again at the words of the closing verse of our text you will note the SOURCE of the faith that supplies us with the righteousness OF GOD, the perfect righteousness of Christ who is our God and Savior. Observe the righteousness of God is by faith OF JESUS CHRIST— that is faith

which has Jesus Christ as both its Object and its Source.

In Acts 16:31 we are told, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” However, realize that the faith by which the believer comes to have the righteousness of God is NOT a faith that is a result of one’s own works, one’s own supposed decision, but is rather God-given faith in Jesus Christ. It’s as Ephesians 2:8-10 clearly states, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Thus, our Lord God does the saving, all of it, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)

So, the sole means by which one can be personally justified in God’s sight is by God-given faith in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord. Accordingly, we read in Romans 3:27 & 28, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Hence, Romans 5:1-2 tells us Christians, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Yes, we who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are personally justified in God’s sight, because God Himself declares us righteous for Jesus’ sake, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,” as Romans 4:25 relates.

Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward being grateful to our gracious Lord, knowing that we are personally justified in God’s sight. Amen.

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