

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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"Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state"

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HOW'S YOUR STANDING?

BY: C. D. COLE

Introduction: How's your standing? You might answer, "My standing is good. I have a clean bill of health." From whom? And you reply, "From myself. I do not know anything very bad I have ever done. I'm no criminal." But I remind you of a certain lawyer who was willing to justify himself to whom the Lord spoke the parable of the good Samaritan. And the Pharisee said that even though he might not know much against himself, he was not thereby justified. **The judge is God.**

If you say your standing is good as a law-abiding citizen, I would remind you that there are a lot of sinners in God's sight who are not in jail.

If you say you have good standing with your neighbors, that they will recommend you, I would remind you again of certain Pharisees who justified themselves before men and the Lord said to them, *"that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God,"* Luke 16:15.

What I mean is this: "How's your standing with God?" What does God say about you? Does He give you a clean bill of health, morally? Can you tell Him that you never do anything wrong?

In this matter of salvation it is God that justifieth. It is not enough to justify oneself, or to be justified by one's neighbors, or by the state. It is one thing to be accepted by our friends and

quite another thing to be accepted of God. It is God that justifieth, and unless He justifies, there is no salvation or hope for any one.

What Does it Mean to Have The Right Standing with God?

It means that God's law has no charge to bring against you. To be right with God means that He does not condemn you; when you do wrong He does not, as a Lawgiver, charge it to your account. *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,"* Romans 4:8. That does not mean that God overlooks your sin, but He does not deal with everybody who sins in the same way. The way God deals with a person for wrong doing depends upon the relation of that person to Him. Two boys commit the crime of throwing rocks at a man's house, resulting in broken windows. The father of one of the boys catches them in the very act. Will he deal with these two boys alike? They have done exactly the same thing. The way he deals with them depends upon the relation they sustain to him. He will chastise his own son, but he dares not chastise his neighbor's boy. He may turn him over to the law.

A justified person is a child of God through the new birth and a son by adoption, and God deals with him as a father toward a son. *'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and*

scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Hebrews 12:6.

Another thing: the believer; the justified person, is not under law, and the law does not condemn one who is not under it. *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace,"* Romans 6:14.

Standing and State

There are two aspects to salvation. There is deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin and there is also the work of fitting one for the presence of God and for the holy environment of heaven. That aspect that delivers from the penalty and punishment of sin is called justification; that aspect that has to do with our internal condition begins with regeneration and ends in glorification. Justification is external and regeneration is internal. One has reference to our standing; it is free from condemnation. The other has reference to our state, involving conduct. Our standing is fixed; our state is variable. Our standing is in Christ who of God is made unto us wisdom, etc. Our state is determined by how much we are filled with the Holy Spirit and our progress in spiritual things.

If we confuse our standing with our state we will be uncertain about whether we are saved or not.

Our standing in Christ is a perfect standing and is forever fixed. Justifi-

cation will never be lost, for *"whom he justified, them he also glorified,"* Romans 8:30.

We have already seen that God is the author of justification. To be saved we must be justified by Him. Now let us further amplify.

Grace Only

What is the moving cause of justification? If God justifies us, what was it that led him to do so? Was it our innocence? Was it our good works? *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"* Romans 3:24. *"For 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,"* Ephesians 2:8, 9.

Blood Only

The meritorious ground, or the just basis of justification. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,"* Ephesians 1:7. *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him,"* Romans 5:9.

Faith Only

The way of justification, or what does the sinner do to be justified? The answer from God's word is plain. The one and only thing he can do to be justified with God is to trust God's Son. *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,"* Romans 3:28. *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"* Romans 5:1. *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,"* Acts 13:39. *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe...,"* Romans 3:22. *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,"* Romans 4:16.

"Twas vain for Israel bitten by serpents on their way,

To look to their own doing,
That awful plague to stay;
The only way for healing,
When humbled in the dust,
Was of the Lord's revealing,
It was not try, but trust.

No deeds of ours are needed
To make Christ's merit more;
No frames of mind or feeling,
Can add to His great store;
'Tis simply to receive Him,
The holy One and Just,
'Tis only to believe Him,
It is not try, but trust."

Evidences of Justification

What does the believer do to prove he is saved? We are justified evidentially by works and by works only. The only evidence of saving faith is his work. And this includes baptism as a work of righteousness.

There is no real difference between Paul and James on justification. There is no reconciliation needed because they never had any falling out. Some (Luther) think Paul taught justification by faith and James taught works for justification. And that to accept one was to reject the other. They are dealing with two different classes. Paul writes about the justification of a sinner, a lost man; James writes about the justification of a saint, a saved man. Paul writes about justification of a person; James writes about the justification of profession. Both illustrate their teaching by the same person: Abraham. Paul takes Abraham as a sinner, a lost man; and writes about justification unto salvation; James takes Abraham after he had been saved many years and shows he was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Abraham was not saved by offering up Isaac. There is only one way to be saved and if Abraham was saved by offering up his son, then everybody else will have to be saved the same way. Paul writes about God receiving a sinner; James about God approving a saint. A sinner is justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone. When a man has saving faith he will do something to whom that he has faith. James deals with a man who says he has faith and

has no works. *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? . . . Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works,"* James 2:14, 17, 18. Saving faith is faith that does more than talk. Abraham proved that he had faith in God when he was willing to slay his son.

"Justification is the divine heart of the gospel, and the gospel for the human heart." William Temple: "The only thing of my very own which I can contribute to my redemption is the sin from which I need to be redeemed."

Justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares one who is unrighteous on his own record to be righteous on the record of His Son whose righteousness is imputed to all who believe on Him. Justification is not a legal fiction or a false declaration. When God declares the believer to be righteous, he is righteous. But he is righteous, not on the ground of his own obedience, but on the ground of the obedience of Christ who was *"obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,"* Philippians 2:8.

The Bible does not say we are justified on account of faith, but only through faith or by faith. We are justified on account of the death and resurrection of Christ; on the basis of His blood atonement.

REDEEMING THE TIME

BY: C. D. COLE

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil," Ephesians 5:15, 16.

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time," Colossians 4:5.

Introduction: Every pastor experiences the problem of choosing his subject for his sermon. Much prayer and waiting upon God is required. Before a sermon can be prepared the subject or text must come to us and take hold on us and hold us fast. And we must forget every other subject. It would be easier to take a book like we do in Sunday School. Then our study would be mapped out for us week by week and we would not have to look to God in prayer to know what we should preach upon. To take a book and follow it chapter by chapter will save us from ignoring certain truths. But the other way; looking to God for a subject and waiting for it to take hold of us and grip us will enable us to give truth in season.

The church epistles were written to meet the specific needs of a certain people at a particular time. Certain evils at Corinth needed attention at once. There were party strifes, suits at law between believers, immorality, disorder in meetings, and other things that needed correction, and so the first letter was written to meet the needs. A perverted Gospel was threatening the churches of Galatia, and Paul wrote the letter to them to warn against this false Gospel, which he calls another gospel; a Gospel not true to the name.

I suppose all pastors meet with opposition when they preach on certain subjects. I think we can safely say as a general thing people do not want what they need. A self righteous man will not like a sermon on salvation by grace, for the simple reason that it exposes his error. A covetous man will not like a sermon from the text, *"It is more blessed to give than receive."* A drinking member will not relish a sermon on what the Bible says on the subject. People who only come to church when there is no where else to go will not like to hear what the

Bible says about forsaking the assembly. The club member or lodge member who puts his club or lodge before his church will resent the truth on the place the church should have in his life. Those who are in the swim socially will not like a sermon on worldliness. Brother Sebastian and Mrs. McGuire; she asked him why he did not save his sermons on sin for the night service when the sinners would be present. I had to give up my pulpit in a certain church because I would not padlock my mouth on certain precious truths of grace. I have preached to men who listened with scorn, or who would look out the window as a way of showing contempt. Advice given a new pastor by a deacon: There are no Jews here; give 'em fits.

This is a warring world. It has always been so since sin came into it. How could it be expected to be anything else when we consider it in rebellion against God. There is war between nations; there is war against the elements: snow, rain, and drought; war against germs which breed disease and bring epidemics; war against insects that bring famine and hunger.

I want us to think about an enemy that is rarely ever considered. The enemy I am talking about is the universal foe. Nothing escapes this enemy. It rides ruthlessly over rich and poor, master and slave, landlord and tenant, employer and employee, parent and child, man and beast, and everything else on earth.

Man has discovered atomic and hydrogen energy and made bombs of which he is very much afraid. The whole world goes into jitters at the thought of their power to destroy. But these weapons, bad as they are, are not apt to take everything and everybody into their blazing arms. Cancer is a terrible disease, but it is not likely that a very large proportion of the human race will die of cancer. Arthritis is painful, but only a small percentage of the human race is in danger of this disease. Automobile accidents maim and kill many people, but it is not a universal danger. War with guns and tanks and bombs threaten to engulf the whole world again, but even war is not the universal foe.

There is one losing battle everyone of us is going to fight; the battle with Father Time. Nothing escapes the power of time. Time will get every human being sooner or later. It slows the swiftest runner, bends the strongest back, reduces to poverty the richest man, stills the voice of the mightiest orator, makes a skeleton of the most charming form. Father Time invades every home, fells the mightiest oak, and stalks every living thing to its grave. And more than that, Father Time will eventually bring everyone of us to the judgment bar of God.

Think how helpless man is in the path of time. He can do nothing to hold it back. Puny man can build no road block to slow its relentless attack. Time has wiped out every generation from the earth since the very beginning. Time is now in the process of cutting all men down. Time will show how utterly helpless all of us are.

There is only one thing men may have that time cannot touch, and that is everlasting life.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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 3:14-18.