

BC Article 23- I believe I am Justified

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: In Article 22 of the Belgic Confession you learned **how to get what Jesus offers**. He offers you grace (salvation) and you get grace by **simply receiving it by faith**. You didn't earn grace; it is a gift! **Faith was your spiritual hands by which you received grace**.

Today we will go one step further and examine the **result of receiving grace through faith. In other words, you will hear what happens when grace enters your life**.

Our headings are:

You are declared justified

You enjoy the results of being justified

Our goals are: That you **recognize that you have been declared permanently and perfectly clean by Christ**, and that **you will then display the awesome results of Christ's work in your life**.

You are declared Justified

We believe that our salvation consists in **the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake**, and that therein **our righteousness before God is implied**; as David and Paul teach us, **declaring this** to be the blessedness of man that **God imputes righteousness to him apart from works**. And the same apostle says that we are **justified freely by his grace**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

1. What is justification?

The word justification comes from two Latin words: "make" and "just." So the *dictionary meaning* is: making just.

But God doesn't make you just when you receive grace. You know you aren't just because you still sin every day. In justification, **God simply declares you to be just**. Theologically, justification means **"God declares a sinner to be innocent of all sins."** You are declared righteous (justified) by God **when you receive the saving merits of Jesus through faith**.

Maybe you can use the expression "just-as-if-I never sinned" to help remember the word "justify."

2. Jesus caused his Father to justify you by doing 2 things for you that you couldn't do for yourself.

a. Jesus obeyed God's law perfectly for you. This is called the **active obedience of Christ**. Throughout his life, even from his youth, he fully obeyed God's law. Adam was bound to obey God's law, but failed, so being a child of Adam, you too failed. **If Adam had passed the test God put him through and perfectly obeyed God, you would have been confirmed as perfectly holy forever** and would not have sinned. He failed miserably. But not your 2nd Adam!

b. Jesus caused your justification by taking the punishment at the end of his life for the sins you did. This is the **passive obedience of Christ.** This is what Adam deserved. This was what you deserved. But he took your place.

2 Corinthians 5:18,19,21 - Now all things are of God, **who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ,** and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, **not imputing their trespasses to them,** and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 21 **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

3. Jesus prays to his Father asking him to justify the ones the Father had given to him-the elect ones!

And whatever Jesus asks for, he gets. He is the truly beloved Son of his Father. So you can **have confidence!** He is not some pauper... He is not a son who is just tolerated by his father. He is only begotten Son of God.

John 17:20 -"I do not pray for these alone, but **also for those who will believe in Me** through their word...

John 6:37 "**All that the Father gives Me** will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me **I will by no means cast out.**

You Enjoy the Results of Being Justified

And therefore we always hold fast this foundation, **ascribing all the glory to God,** humbling ourselves before Him, and acknowledging ourselves to be such as we really are, without presuming to trust in anything in ourselves, or in any merit of ours, relying and resting upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which becomes ours when we believe in Him. This is sufficient to **cover all our iniquities,** and to **give us confidence in approaching to God; freeing the conscience of fear, terror, and dread,** without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig-leaves. And, verily, if we should appear before God, **relying on ourselves or on any other creature,** though ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed. And therefore everyone must pray with David: O Jehovah, **enter not** into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living is righteous.

1. Justification through Jesus Christ give you peace with God – a permanent peace.

You can have confidence in this. God does not break his treaty with his Son and he does not break his promises to you.

Romans 5:1 - Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord...**

Why is this so important? It is important because **if you did not have** peace with God, his eternal judgment would still be on your head. But God's condemnation is not on your head

anymore. **Christ secured this for you.** It is illustrated in Zechariah 3.

Zechariah 3:1-5 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the **Angel of the LORD**, and **Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.** 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! **The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!** Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" 3 **Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,** and was standing **before the Angel.** 4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "**See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.**" 5 And I said, "**Let them put a clean turban on his head.**" So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the **Angel of the LORD** stood by.

The 4 persons are: God the Father, Joshua is the man, Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ, and Satan, the accuser. The picture then is that of the Devil standing as constant accuser, accusing Joshua of being dirty. But Jesus removed Joshua's dirty clothes.

And Jehovah simply made a declaration...ignoring the Devil's claims...or purity. (Isn't that exciting?) **And Jesus was there, for he was the means by which Joshua was made clean.** It is like God covered over your errors. And when God declares peace between you and him, **he then allows you to enter into his presence.** (Isn't justification awesome?)

At the end of the world there will be Great Supper in heaven. You will sit with Jesus and enjoy this fellowship.

Revelation 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: **'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'**" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

2. Justification through Jesus Christ gives you confidence and eternal security now in this world.

So you have more reasons to be confident.

You don't have to worry like the Romanist who says you have to be justified more and more throughout your life. (That puts enormous guilt and pressure.) No! Justification is a one-time declaration that your sins of the past, present, and future have been paid for by Christ by his active and passive obedience. You are free.

You don't have to worry like Arminians who teach that justification was only the remissions of the sins of your past. All your sins are gone.

Psalm 32:1 - **Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,** Whose sin is covered.

You have a clear conscience. God declares you to be blessed. **Nothing that is holy can become unclean when it is set apart by Jesus.** Sleep guilt free! Wake up guilt free!

Maybe you had a past before you were married, let it go. God has forgiven you!

Maybe you were mistreated by a Christian husband or parent. Let it go!

The Lord has let their sins go and so should you!

3. Justification through Jesus Christ causes you to pray without fear.

Surely there is no prayer without sacrifice. But you do have a sacrifice. You don't have to run and hide like Adam did when he sinned against God. God does not keep a record of sins (Psalm 130) otherwise... who could stand.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

4. Justification through Jesus Christ gives you comfort because Jesus is your eternal defender and advocate.

So if enemies come against you, don't worry. Jesus will preserve you!

Hebrews 13:6 So we may boldly say: "**The LORD is my helper; I will not fear.** What can man do to me?"

So if you fall away from serving the Lord for a time, you don't have to panic. You don't lose your salvation!

5. Justification through Jesus Christ causes you to glorify and worship God.

In the past, no priest could enter into God's presence without sacrifices being made for him, and neither could you enter into God's presence without sacrifice. **You have Jesus' sacrifice.**

Psalm 115:1 **Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.**

6. Justification through Jesus Christ makes you humble; a boastful man doesn't understand justification.

You and your father Adam had a desire to be autonomous— independent of God. When God helps you to see how hopeless your condition was...and when you see how God sent a holy Christ to take his place, it humbles you.

Psalm 130:5-8 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope.
6 My soul waits for the Lord More than those who watch for the morning—
Yes, more than those who watch for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption. 8 And He shall redeem Israel From all his iniquities.

Humility makes you worship better. So if you are not humble, ask God to see what you were before and what Jesus did for you.

7. Justification through Jesus Christ makes you able to do all kinds of good works for God.

You can gain no merit for good works unless you have faith.

This means, of course that all religions are not the same. Only Christianity speaks of the need for justification to be saved. So only the Christian can be saved. And only the Christian can do good works.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

This means you have moral duty to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ so God can give faith!

8. Justification through Jesus Christ causes you to be able to feed on him.

He is the vine and you are the branches. This is the means you are able to live for him...and have the strength to confront those who oppose him...and proclaim the Gospel to them.

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Conclusion:

As a result of receiving, by faith, the active and passive obedience of Jesus, you are declared justified. You are made right with God permanently, irrevocably. You then have permanent peace with the Father.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Let your justification be a **source of comfort to you.**
2. Let it, it gives you **confidence and eternal security.**
3. Let it make you **approach God in prayer and worship.**
4. Let it make you **humble.**
5. Let it motivate you to **work hard for him.**
6. Let it make you **daily feed on Christ** to strengthen your soul.
7. Let it make you **rejoice.**
8. Let it make you **share him.**

The blessing of God's salvation is rich, full, and free and **your share is never diminished if you share it.**

If you are not a Christian, you are still in your sins, and you will face the full judgment of God for your sins and spend eternity in hell. But you still have time to be saved from that judgment. Some who went to bed last night did not wake up today...and they will never have this opportunity, but you have this opportunity. Don't squander it. Call to God for help. Ask him to justify you because of Jesus.