

Ga 3:6-9 (ESV) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? ⁽⁷⁾ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁽⁸⁾ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁽⁹⁾ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

1. Problem in Galatia: The legalists had come storming in

- A. Teaching to be saved you must have faith in Christ and keep the law
 - 1). Faith in Christ PLUS circumcision – dietary laws – observing special days etc.

Point: Christ work alone is not enough to merit your salvation – you must add to it

2. Paul has been arguing in Chapter 3

- A. It was by the gospel of salvation by faith they were given the Spirit of God
And God confirmed that Gospel through miracles
- B. Now he goes all the way back to the beginning of the Jewish nation
And asks. “How was Abraham made right with God?” Faith or works – grace or human merit

Thought: This is a brilliant move by Paul (as usual)

- A. Remember he’s countering the false teachers who are saying
“To be right with God you have to live like a Jew. Observing their law”
 - 1). I’m sure they used Abraham – a hero in Israel as an example – citing Genesis 17
“Abraham who was called the friend of God was commanded to be circumcised”
“Want to be a friend of God? Then keep the law! Be circumcised like Abraham was”
- B. But as usual these legalists had taken the scriptures out of context
 - 1). They had conveniently moved from Gen. 12 where Abraham was called by God
To Gen. 17 where he was commanded by God to be circumcised
 - 2). Skipping over Gen. 15 – where he was considered to be righteous before he was circumcised
- C. So Paul says “Fine. Let’s use Abraham the father of the Jews as an example! Great idea!”
 - 1). But let’s make sure we have our facts right about how he was made right with God

I. ABRAHAM'S JUSTIFICATION

Ga 3:6 (ESV) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was *counted* to him as righteousness”?

1. Counted = an accounting term

- A. Means to confer a *status* on something that wasn’t there before
 - 1). In Abraham’s case he was not righteous then something happened
And from that point on God considered him to be righteous

Question: What happened? He was given a *new legal status* before God

- A. That’s what justification is – a change in legal status with God
 - 1). God declares that the one who has placed their faith in His Son
Has moved from a state of guilt before Him to one whose record of guilt is wiped clean
 - 2). They are now considered by Him to be righteous = 100% compliance to the law
 - a). Why? Because they are now keeping the law – No!
Because Jesus kept the law perfectly – and God places His obedience into your account
 - 1a). And treats you as if you had lived His life – without ever breaking the law once

Point: Paul is arguing – salvation has always been by faith – didn’t just crop up in the NT

- A. Go all the way back to Abraham – Genesis 15 and you’ll find it there
Ga 3:6 (ESV) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?
- B. So for you to be right with God – counted as righteous – then...

Ga 3:7 (ESV) Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

- 1). Want to be right with God like Abraham was – do what Abraham did – believe

What Does It Mean to Have Faith Like Abraham?

1. Saving faith is believing the Gospel promise

Ga 3:6 (ESV) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

- A. Notice it *doesn't say* that Abraham *believed in God* and was counted righteous – Why?
 - 1). He obviously did believe in God – but you can believe in God without believing God
 - 2). You can believe in God and still be lost

Point: So saving faith is different than a general agreement that God exists

- A. Abraham believed in God but he also believed God
 - 1). Believing and trusting in what God actually said in His promise to him

Transition: First – saving faith is believing the Gospel promise

2. Saving faith is faith in God's provision and not our performance

Let's see how that works out in Abraham's life

- A. Abraham and Sarah were childless – well past the age of being able to bear children

Ge 15:2 (ESV) But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless...?”
- B. God answered by promising His offspring would be as innumerable as the stars

Ge 15:5 (ESV) And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Reiterating the promise already given: Gen 12:2-3 (NIV) “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; *and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*”

 - 1). This would happen through Abraham's descendant = Jesus Christ

Notice: This was all God's doing NOT man's

- A. God waited intentionally until Abraham and Sarah couldn't do anything to bear a child – impossible
 - 1). God waited until Abraham's only hope was God doing what he couldn't do himself
- B. Why? I believe because it is all a picture of the Gospel
 - 1). Isaac the promised child would continue that line that Jesus would come out of
 - 2). So the promise to Abraham could be fulfilled – his descendant blessing all the nations on earth
- C. This must be a work of God alone – a work of His grace not man's work – schemes etc.
 - 1). *The only thing required of Abraham was to believe the promise was true – that God didn't lie*
- D. Paul tells us Abraham did believe and was considered to be righteous because of that

Ge 15:6 (ESV) And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Point: That is the same with our salvation isn't it?

- A. As long as you think you can be good enough to earn God's favor – you won't!
 - 1). To be saved you must turn from any reliance upon yourself – trusting in Him and His work alone
 - 2). Trusting the promises that all who go to Christ trusting Him for salvation will be saved
- B. It's the difference between the Pharisee and tax collector – Luke 18
 - 1). Pharisee reminds God who he is and what he's done – relying on his own works to get in
 - 2). Tax collector cries out for mercy = not getting what you do deserve

“Don't give me what I deserve. I deserve wrath! Give me what I don't deserve. Grace!”

 - a). Jesus said the tax collector went home justified – Pharisee went home lost

As religious as can be and as lost as can be

Summary: So Abraham was counted righteous before the law was given – before he was circumcised

- A. Why circumcision then? It was an external sign of an inward reality – sin cut away from the heart
 - 1). It is like baptism is today – a public declaration we’ve turned from sin to live for Jesus
 - B. Circumcision and baptism don’t save – simply state externally what has already happened internally
- Transition:** Notice the interesting statement in v. 8

The Gospel Was Announced Beforehand to Abraham

Need to work this out: Ga 3:8 (ESV) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, *preached the gospel beforehand* to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

1. Promise is given to Abraham that all nations will be blessed through him

- A. Obviously means through His descendant – Jesus Christ
 - 1). What is the blessing? Genesis 15:6 tells us – *Justification* – being made right with God
 - 2). How did that blessing come into Abraham’s life – by faith
- B. Paul says that was an announcement to everybody – that was how the blessing would come to all
 - 1). The good news of God that results in Justification – comes to everybody by faith

Thought: Have you ever thought of this? Abraham was saved by the work of Christ

Ga 3:6 (ESV) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as *righteousness*”?

- A. Whose righteousness must that be? Jesus Christ!
The only righteousness that gets somebody into heaven
- B. Abraham believed the extent of light he’d been given – and was counted to be righteous
 - 1). God applied the righteousness of Christ to him in advance
- C. We could say the OT saint was saved by God looking forward to the work of Christ
Applying what His Son would do
 - 1). NT saint is saved by God looking back on His work – applying what He did do!

Transition: Paul argues – salvation has always been by faith and not works

2. He sums it up in v. 9

Ga 3:9 (ESV) So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

- A. So then those who place their faith in Christ are blessed just like Abraham was
 - 1). We are justified – our *legal status* is changed from guilty too righteous
- B. It is so important we see what it means when we say *justification changes our legal status*

II. ABRAHAM’S CHANGED STATUS BEFORE GOD

Ga 3:6 (ESV) just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

1. Notice: He was not justified as a result of any works

- A. His personal devotion – or religious ritual such as circumcision – or eating or abstaining certain foods
 - 1). It wasn’t by anything Abraham did or would do
- B. He believed God’s promise – that **He** would do what **He** said would do
 - 1). When he believed God – God counted him to be righteous

Notice: The wording is so important – Listen. Lock on. – it doesn’t say Abraham became righteous
In the sense that his lifestyle changed – and that is what saved him

- A. It says he believed and he was *counted righteous*
Even though we know from scripture he would still have many failures in his life

Point: Abraham believed God and even though God knew he would still struggle and fail – sometimes big

- A. That wouldn’t change that legal declaration by God – I consider you to be righteous
I have wiped the records clean – you are free from condemnation in a legal sense

- 1). I will still treat you legally as if my law had nothing against you
- B. Here is our peace – we are still loved and accepted by God even while still sinful and imperfect
 - 1). Remember Martin Luther's famous saying: *Simul Justus et Peccator*
Simultaneously righteous and sinful

2. Does this mean it doesn't matter if I sin? Of course not!

- A. Grace is the principle that helps us rest in the work of Christ
My acceptance with God is based on His performance not mine – my failure doesn't shut me out
 - B. But grace is also the power that enables us to fight sin and to live a Christlike life
 - 1). Think of what God has done for you by grace to enable you to live an overcoming life
 - a). He has given you a new nature – wired with new holy desires
He has placed His Spirit in you to empower you to live out those desires
New covenant. Seen before but need to drive these things deep: Ezek 36:26-27 (NIV) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
 - 2). Listen to how Paul works this out
1 Co 15:10 (ESV) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
 - a). I served diligently – with great discipline - Grace caused me to do that!
 - C. So grace does not overwrite the commands to strive for holiness. To put to death the deeds of the flesh. To enter in through the narrow door because broad is the way to destruction.
 - 1). What grace does is gives us the desires and power to obey those commands – to work that out
 - 2). Then being imperfect – grace enables us to stand back up when we fail
 - a). As we remind ourselves of why we were accepted by God – Christ's perfection
And why we are still accepted – it is still based on Christ's work not ours (2 weeks ago)
- Thought:** There are two theological concepts happening here – two things that happen at point of salvation
- A. There is a one-time act of God – that will never change = that's *justification*
And we enter into a process that is changing all the time = that's *sanctification*
 - 1). Unless we understand the relationship between these two we will never rest – never find joy

Justification and Sanctification (Both happen at the point of salvation)

1. Justification: A one-time *legal* declaration by God that will never change

- A. The sinner who places their faith in Christ is declared by Him to have a change of legal status
 - 1). They were guilty now they are righteous – how?
 - a). He places (Imputes) Christ's righteousness into their account as a free gift
- B. Substitution: Puts our sin into Christ's account and treats Him as if He lived our life = wrath
 - 1). Puts Christ righteousness into our account and treats us as if we lived His life = perfect obedience
 - a). Why Romans 8:1 can say "There is therefore no condemnation to those in Christ"
 - 1a). That's a legal verse – God looks at you as if you had kept His law perfectly
So what would there be to condemn – to send you to hell over

2. Sanctification: A process we enter into at the point of salvation

- A. Because we are saved (Justified) – become God's child – we are also changed (Nature, desires, Spirit)
 - 1). So we enter into the process of growing in practical holiness – Christlikeness = *Sanctification*
- B. This is not the cause of our salvation – it is proof that we have been saved! Have been changed

3. The difference we must see

- A. That legal status that *justification* gives us will never change – Why?
 - 1). Because it is based on Christ's performance and not ours – His performance is stable
 - 2). It has nothing to do with my work (weakness) it depends upon Christ work alone
- B. But the process of sanctification can change from moment to moment – *why? I'm involved!*
 - 1). You can be at home – Mr./Mrs. Spiritual – belting out “How great thou art”
 - a). You turn on the news – elections – immediately in the flesh – your holiness heads South
 - b). From model Christian to the depths of the flesh expressing itself
 - 2). You're in your car – thoughts are in the heavenlies – somebody cuts you off
 - a). Your brought back to earth quickly aren't you?
 - b). Get convicted about those thoughts of anointing them with fists – repent

Point: Justification is stable – sanctification is as unstable as can be

- A. You must see the difference in these two
 - 1). Justification will always bring about the process of sanctification – growing in holiness
 - a). If salvation hasn't changed you – you're not saved
 - 2). But that change is a process – not perfect
 - a). Must see those ups and downs of that process does not affect our acceptance with God

Transition: Being an artist I do a lot better with something visual – so I made a chart

- A. The Justification – Sanctification chart – some of you have seen this – time to bring it out again

Justification – Sanctification Chart (See Chart on last page)

If your listening on line – we will put this up on our website to download – probably by Wednesday – gracespringsoc.org
I'll attach it to the end of the notes. You can download the notes I teach from to see all the quotes/scriptures etc.

1. Left side - “Compliance to God's law”

- A. Remember it takes righteousness to get into heaven
Righteousness is 100% compliance to God's law - no failures at all
James 2:10 (NIV) For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.
 - 1). One sin makes you a lawbreaker – there will be no lawbreakers in heaven
- B. So to get into heaven on your own you need to max out that left side – all the way to 100%

2. Top line (Red) is Christ's performance – 100% compliance

- A. His obedience to the law was perfect - no dips at all – no failures at all = Righteousness

3. Bottom line (Green) - unbeliever - 0% compliance to the law

Rom 8:7 (NIV) the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

4. Middle line (Blue) - sanctification - our performance

- A. Notice this is all over the place - changes from moment to moment – unstable as water
 - 1). Peaking one moment – dipping the next
 - 2). BUT you never hit that red mark – what is required to get into heaven

A Vital Question to Ask Yourself

1. Where do I base my assurance? What is my Justification based on?

- A. If I'm basing my assurance on my performance – that blue line – how can I find any comfort?
 - 1). I'm feeling good about myself at this moment – next moment I dip...
- B. So how can somebody like me find a place of rest? A place of security?

- 1). I must base my security by looking at the same line God looks at
He looks at that red line ALONE – basing my acceptance on the righteousness of Christ ALONE
 - a). He doesn't look at the blue as far as my acceptance with Him goes
 - b). He will – out of love – deal with me when I dip down into sin – conviction to turn me
 - 1a). But my acceptance with Him will always be based on that red line

Question: What does the truth of justification do?

It frees me from drawing upon my most recent performance

To determine whether I feel God accepts me or not on that day

- A. He DOES accept me because He accepted Christ! It's that simple
- B. Brothers and sisters for your joy GET THIS
 - 1). If your saved – you are changing – grace does not leave you where it finds you!
 - 2). But your life will *always* look like that blue line
 - a). You have to base your assurance on what God does – that RED LINE!

CONCLUSION

1. How are we saved? The same way salvation has always happened

- A. It is by trusting in what God said – trusting in what God has done for us – not in what we do for Him

2. What happens when we are saved – two things

- A. We are justified – God places His Son's righteousness into our account
and based on that – declares us to be righteous – that His law now has nothing against us
 - 1). This is a legal status that will never change
- B. We also enter into the process of sanctification – growing in Christlikeness
 - 1). Every true believer will see changes – because of what happens at salvation
 - a). By grace given new nature – new desires – God takes up residence by the Spirit
 - 2). While justification is a status that will never change – sanctification changes all the time

3. What are you looking at for your peace before God

- A. Are you looking at your performance? That blue line – you'll find no peace/joy there
You MUST learn to look at that red line – Christ's performance – that is what God is looking at
 - 1). There is great peace and joy there!
- B. Let me finish with an email I received not that long ago – what this truth does

A message for Pastor Foote;

About six months, give or take, ago I downloaded your Gospel of Grace series and finally listened to it. Much of what was in that message I never heard before. I grew up and lived most of my life in legalism. I listened to the message and took it to heart. In fact I have listened to it a couple times so far and even downloaded the PDF files from SermonAudio.com I intend to listen to the message over and over again until I am trusting completely in the sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ alone with nothing added. I have spoken to God more in the last two weeks than I ever did before listening to the series. After listening to the message the first time I called God Father and when the word left my mouth I was shocked because I think it was the first time I said it without fear of retribution this time it was different I felt giddy and said it again and have a few times since because I know that I can. These last few times saying it when the message sunk in, it didn't fully the first time, it felt right and I felt secure for the first time ever.

Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and nothing else for salvation .

Thank you for this message, I finally feel free. I know I will have to lean on the teachings in this series until they become second nature and are drilled into my head, but I am free because I cannot do anything for salvation except believe on the Lord Jesus Christ alone, nothing else.

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- A. That makes all this more than worth it – to proclaim truth that sets people free
1). Grace is so freeing – Grace is so Amazing!

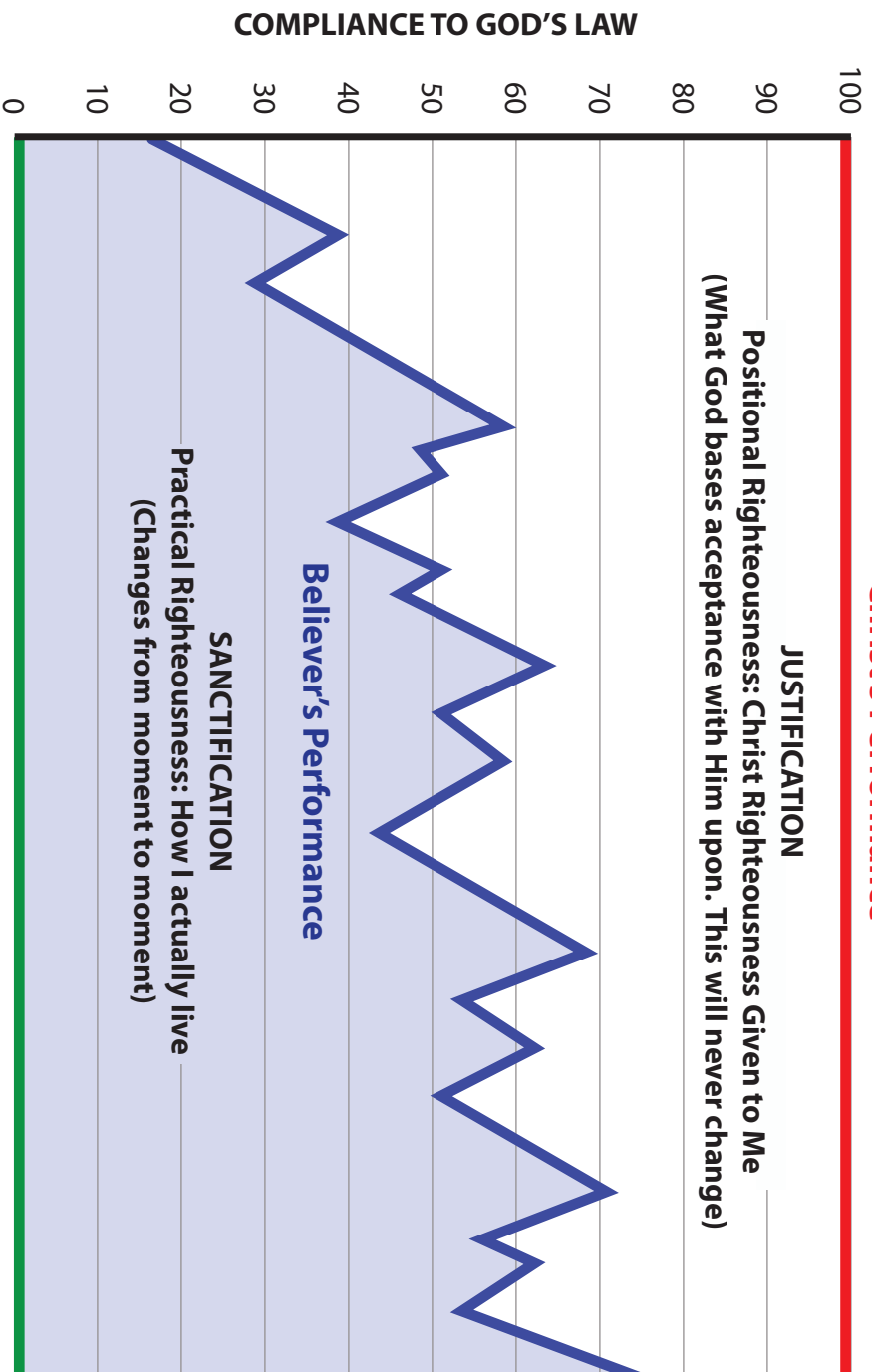
Justification - Sanctification chart is on last page

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

Christ's Performance

JUSTIFICATION

Positional Righteousness: Christ Righteousness Given to Me
(What God bases acceptance with Him upon. This will never change)



Believer's Performance

SANCTIFICATION

Practical Righteousness: How I actually live
(Changes from moment to moment)

Unbeliever's Performance

Roman 8:7