

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Justification & Holiness**

**Justification & Holiness - posted by DirkW (), on: 2011/3/22 16:17**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Some theologians talk about Judicial Wrath and Fatherly Displeasure, saying when we are justified by faith, by the complete work of Christ we are saved, totally depending on His work, not our own works. Then we are saved from judicial wrath (our sins can never ever cause God to pour out His wrath on us), then they also talk about Fatherly displeasure, talking about when we sin, we fall under fatherly displeasure and the Father will go after us until we repent and listen to His loving and righteous will.

1. Say for example when a christian sins and finds it difficult to repent or in a way can't do that because of fear, the heaviness of his sin or some else thing and he doesn't repent... is this sin then forgiven because of the justification?

2. And what are works of faith. Because because of the finished work of Christ there will flow works from the christians. What are these works? What are the fruits of being a christian? Sometimes it looks like there is no progress but going backwards...seeing so much sin, lack of prayer, reading the word, evangelism etc. that you think miserable me am I saved? On the other hand you tend to fall then in a worksbased salvation then, how do you look at this...? What is a healthy balance between faith & works, between justified and growing as a christian.

I numbered the two questions to answer, could you please answer them both because sometimes on this forum people answer but not the question people asked and that's not so handy :o)

God bless

**Re: Justification & Holiness - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2011/3/22 16:34**

We cannot earn or merit justification with God by our own good works or keeping of the law. However, once we become born again by believing the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ, we will produce good works because we love our Lord and Savior. Good works does not procure salvation but instead is evidence that we are saved. Many people put the cart in front of the horse with respect to law and grace unfortunately.

**Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2011/3/22 19:08**

Good reply TrueWitness.

Eph. 2:8-10 "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.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Verse 10 is clear about the evidence of justification. God saves us to do good works. Good works do not save us but are an evidence of salvation.

**Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2011/3/22 19:47**

Dirk,

You are raising the question of "Imputed Righteousness". A question that marked the difference between Finney's theology and his contemporaries, and for which he is considered a heretic by many.

Finney believed in the imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification or the moment of belief. By belief here I mean true faith, not merely a mental consent. In justification the righteousness of Christ is imputed or counted to the sinner and the sinner's sin and guilt is imputed to Christ which he bore and suffered the consequence for two thousand years ago on the cross but because He is eternal and not merely a human priest He can ever live to make intercessions for those

those who come to God by Him. His sacrifice looks to the past and to the future. He can justify past sinners like Abraham, present sinners like you and me, and future sinners. Even sinners that did not have a full comprehension of who Christ is but had faith in God. God was able to justify them only because He laid their sin on Christ.

Both Finney and his contemporaries believed that the unjustified sinner is dead in his sin and unable to comprehend spiritual truth, hater of God and in rebellion towards Him, therefore the presence of the Holy Spirit in the person giving the Gospel message is of uttermost importance. Finney believed that a person can not be a pastor or preacher unless He is filled with the Holy Spirit, otherwise he is giving the hearer only the letter that kills.

But here is where they are different. Finney believed that in justification, the sinner is cleansed from his past sins, made whiter than snow, reconciled to God, and born anew. From that moment on until he dies there begins something called sanctification. While you could look at justification as a trade, sanctification is the indwelling of the righteousness of Christ in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

Finney and his contemporaries are really closer than you think but he is misunderstood or misrepresented by both his opponents and his followers.

Both Finney and his opponents believed that true faith must produce good works and that good works are evidence not a cause of salvation. In other words, Finney believed that good works that are not a result of faith can not save anybody.

But they were different as in the following example:

While Finney's contemporaries/ opponents believed that works as evidence of salvation is as in (The Murderer's case). When God looks at the murderer, He sees him as a murderer whether the murderer leaves behind evidence of his murder or not. The same way with the justified person. He is seen by God as justified whether he produces evidence of his justification or not. If he sins he is still counted righteous. If he continues in sin it must mean that he was never saved.

If you read The 1689 Confession of Faith on "Good works" it lists the importance of good works in the following "And by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God. Nothing about justification, escaping judgment,...

While on the other hand Finney believed in good works as evidence of salvation as in the (Nature of the Light). When the light enters a confined space, it will shine. Same with the believer who is abiding in Christ by faith. In contrast with the murderer's case whose position can not be judged by the evidence he leaves behind but by who he legally is before God, the light's very nature is to make a place shine. If the light does not shine, it must be concluded that it is not light, or that this person is not abiding in Christ. While if the murderer does or does not leave evidence he is a murderer anyway. In other words, the murderer has the option of leaving evidence behind or not. When other people see the evidence of his murder, they may conclude that he is a murderer, but if they do not see any evidence they may conclude that he is not a murderer. However, when God looks at him, He sees a murderer always. The same with the justified person. If he produces works of righteousness, people may conclude that he is saved, but if they do not see any works of righteousness, they may conclude that he is not saved. However, when God looks at him, he sees him saved always.

Finney believed that the only righteousness that is pleasing to God is Christ's righteousness that indwells the believer but that is the believer's responsibility to abide in Christ. If he fails to abide in Christ and falls in sin, he will be judged for his sin unless he repents and is granted forgiveness by God. God will forgive the penitent because He lays his sin on Christ but that, argued Finney, does not happen automatically. If it does, the Bible would never ask believers to repent when they sin after their initial act of repentance and faith.

That would be adding to the work of Christ. If God looks at the believer and only sees Christ's righteousness imputed to him. Then how could Paul ask the church at Corinth regarding the man that sinned in 1 Corinthians 5:5 that they should take a stand against such. He was truly justified because Paul said: "Let such be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the body in order that the soul may be saved on the day of our Lord Jesus." If this man was not justified, then how could his soul be saved. This and other incidents in the Scriptures suggest the following:

- (1) Justified believers can and do sin if they fail to abide in Christ at all times.
- (2) God is not blind to their sin nor does He see them covered with the righteousness of Christ when they sin, but rather,

He sees them as they really are.

(3) Justified believers will be judged for all unconfessed and unforsaken sin on the day of judgment according to what one has done in the body whether good or bad.

Let us look at salvation as follow.

A man who breaks the law is like a man who breaks a neighbors window. Nothing could be done about the broken glass. It is already done. No matter what this person can do, he can never put the broken glass together again. That is when God steps in and provide a substitute to do what we can never do. But from that moment on, our very nature has changed ( given that we are walking in the Spirit which is our human responsibility) that we do not want to break our neighbors window any longer.

That is why "Imputed Righteous", or also know as legal, judicial, forensic, positional justification is a concept that is applied to the initial act of salvation. If the believer sins during his life time, repents, and granted forgiveness. God will take his sin and imputes it to Christ, and takes Christ righteousness and imputes it to the penitent believer, but it will not happen automatically. That is the main difference between the theology of Finney and His contemporaries.

He is accused of promoting self-righteous effort in salvation because he insisted that sanctification is not an automatic process.