

Session 4 Take-Home: Justified

What We Found

Justification is a **gift**: "they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24); God "justifies the ungodly" (Rom 4:5); and the justified have "peace with God" and "access to this grace in which we stand" (Rom 5:1-2). Nothing from Session 2 was taken back: no one earns the beginning.

And the gift transforms. When God declares, reality obeys ("Let there be light"). So Scripture refuses to stop at the verdict: "if any one is in Christ, he is a **new creation**" (2 Cor 5:17); "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified" (1 Cor 6:11); Christ was made sin "so that in him we might **become** the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). David asked for exactly this: "**Create** in me a clean heart, O God" (Ps 51:10), and Ezekiel promised it: the heart of stone out, the heart of flesh in (Ezek 36:26). "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man" (CCC 1989, quoting the Council of Trent), and it is conferred in Baptism (CCC 1992).

We discovered that Scripture attaches faith and justification language to three moments of Abraham's life, decades apart: the call he obeyed (Gen 12; Heb 11:8), the stars he believed (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3), and the altar where "faith was completed by works" and Genesis 15 "was fulfilled" (Gen 22; Jas 2:21-23). Righteousness, in Scripture, is alive: gratuitously begun, really given, and grown in a walk with God.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Irenaeus of Lyons

Against Heresies, Book IV, ch. 20 (2nd century)

"The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God." Applied to justification (the application is ours, from his anthropology): God is not filing verdicts but making creatures alive with his life and turned to behold him.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Thomas Aquinas

Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 113, a. 9

The justification of the ungodly is, in one respect, a greater work than the creation of heaven and earth: the good of grace in a single soul is greater than the natural good of the entire universe. What happened at your Baptism outweighs the making of the galaxies.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH · St. Leo the Great

Sermon 21, On the Nativity (5th century)

"Christian, recognize your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition." The Catechism opens its section on Christian morality with this line (CCC 1691). Trent's point exactly: justification is not only the remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man; Scripture's warnings are addressed to that real new life.

Live It This Week

Pray Psalm 51. Once this week, pray the whole psalm slowly, and mean verse 10.

Reread the mountain. Read Genesis 22:1-18 on your own, remembering it is the fulfillment of the stars. Ask what God has asked you to trust him with.

Say the sentence. Memorize this and try it on a friend: "Justification is not God calling me something I am not. It is God making me something I was not."

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 5:1 (RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Galatians 5:1-15, and underline what Paul says avails in Christ Jesus.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1987, 1989, 1990-1992, 1995