

FREE GRACE

*God's Gracious Gift Of
Justifying Sinners*



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INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther was driving his Father Confessor nuts. Sure, confession of sins was a regular part of life within the monastic order, but not every single day for hours at a time! On one occasion, Martin was said to have spent six hours confessing the sins he had committed the previous day. Six hours!!

Martin's guilt complex was and is renown—perhaps unlike anything you or I have encountered. But, there was a reason for that guilt. As R.C. Sproul notes, “Luther's legal mind was haunted by the question: how can an unjust (sinful) man survive in the presence of a just (holy) God.”¹ It was that question that paralyzed Luther and caused him to live in terror. His biographer, Roland Bainton writes,

Despair invaded Luther's spirit. Panic swept over him. He trembled at the rustling of a wind-blown leaf.²

Perhaps we think, “Come on, Martin, lighten up! Why feel so guilty and fearful?” So, was he losing his mind? If we think Luther was, we need to realize that, when the Bible described the responses people had as they directly encountered Almighty God, the description, more often than not, was one of *sheer psychological trauma!* Isaiah saw the Lord “lofty and exalted” and cried out, “Woe is me, for I am undone” (Isaiah 6:5). “Destroyed” is more of the literal idea there. Also, in describing an encounter he evidently had with God, Eliphaz exclaimed, “Dread came upon me, and trembling, and made all my bones shake. . . The hair of my flesh bristled up” (Job 4:14-15). Did you get that? Eli-

phaz's hair stood on end! He also was "undone."

But what about Jesus? If we think Jesus represented a milder more "user friendly" version of God, we must ask, "What about Peter?" "What about John?" After Jesus miraculously loaded Peter's boats with fish, Peter thanked Him by saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). And, when John the apostle saw the glorified Christ, John fell at Jesus' feet "as a dead man" (Revelation 1:17). This the response from the disciple who described himself as the one "whom Jesus loved" (John 20:2)!! So no, while we might think Martin Luther was imbalanced, he was actually quite sane when he struggled with such guilt and fears before God!

But why? Why such discomfort in God's presence? The reason quite simply is, because God is holy and we're not! God's *holiness* means there is a radical "transcendence" (or, lofty separateness) about Him. He is thoroughly and completely pure. No sin or guilty sinner can continue to exist in His presence. Habakkuk said of God, "Your eyes are too pure to look upon evil, and You cannot look on wickedness" (1:13). Job 15:15 tells us, "Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in His sight." That, dear person, is radical holiness!

Many these days, though, regard God as someone on their level. They assume He sees things as they see things and judges things as they judge them ("on the curve"). They think, "Fear the Almighty?! How archaic!! There's nothing dangerous about God!!"

However, we must ask whether God is indeed “not dangerous”—is He instead the “user friendly” Deity? Not according to the Bible. For example, we’re told in Exodus 34:7, “He (God) will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.” And, the truth is, we’re all guilty. “There is no man who does not sin” (1 Kings 8:46). None of us have “loved God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). You see, when the standard is perfection (God Himself), God cannot “grade on the curve.” If God was to be flexible and accommodate any imperfection, He would not be true to Himself and would cease to exist. And here is what we really don’t typically understand: Because our offense has been committed against an infinitely perfect God Who is worthy of our perfect adoration and obedience, our crime is worthy of an infinite degree of punishment in a literal eternal hell. The prospect of such punishment is indeed frightening. As Jonathan Edwards remarks,

The damned in hell would be ready to give the world if they could have the number of their sins to have been one less.³

But please don’t stop reading just yet, for this is not the end of the story! Coming back to Martin Luther, as Martin was studying and teaching the Book of Romans, he became stuck on what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 4:5,

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Then it happened. As Martin pondered this verse, he had his “eye-opening” conversion experience. God

threw on the *spiritual* light switch, so to speak, and Martin saw how it is that holy God, Who doesn't "grade on the curve," can accept and receive ungodly sinful people to Himself in love. Listen to how Martin Luther described his experience,

I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the justice of God," because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage Him (I.e., satisfy Him). Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against Him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant.

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.⁴

Do you see it? Something incredible, indeed, something *marvelous* happened there for Martin. He not only saw how God could be just (I.e., true to Himself) and accept ungodly sinners to Himself, but Martin himself entered through those doors of God's acceptance into paradise. In other words, he came to possess eternal life and the hope of heaven.

WHAT IS MEANT BY “JUSTIFICATION”?

The wonderful thing was, Martin Luther came to realize that wonderful and priceless biblical truth which asserts that God accepts (justifies) sinful people into a love relationship with Him, not on the basis of any good thing they have done, but purely on the basis of His *free* justifying grace. Such acceptance, or *justification*, is a gift, which comes to a person through faith. This is the most precious truth in all of Scripture! This is the item upon which Christianity either stands or falls! You see, there are only two religions in the world: either the one that says “you’ve got to do it—you’ve got to work and earn your way to heaven” (call it, “DO”); or, Christianity, which says, “you can’t do it—God must do it for you” (call it “DONE”). There are only these two religions, “DO” versus “DONE”. There are no others!

So, what is meant by “justification” or “to be justified?” “Justification,” in the Bible, has a kind of “legal” idea or background. It is courtroom language, having the idea of “a legal declaration.” It is God’s *judicial* pronouncement upon a person that they are “not guilty,” as well as that they are “fully righteous.” Now, don’t be mistaken. It isn’t that the person themselves is *actually* a “not guilty/fully righteous” person, but that God *declares* them as such. John MacArthur gives us this helpful illustration,

When I was married, . . . Patricia and I stood before the minister (my father) and recited our vows. Near the end of the ceremony, my father declared, “By the authority vested in me by the state of California, I now

pronounce you man and wife.” Instantly we were legally husband and wife. Whereas seconds before we had been an engaged couple, now we were married. Nothing inside us actually changed when those words were spoken. But our status changed before God, the law, and our family and friends. The implications of that simple declaration have been lifelong and life-changing (for which I am grateful). But when my father spoke those words, *it was a legal declaration only.*⁵

This is similar to what God does when He “justifies” a person. As the Judge of the Universe, He pronounces *a declaration* upon a believer. This courtroom (legal) kind of declaration is reflected in Romans 8:33-34, where Paul says, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns.” Do you see it? Do you see the courtroom kind of idea that is going on there? From this and other passages we can see that this declaration from God is two-fold. First, there is the pronouncement of “not guilty” upon the accused. This is amazing! Even though they are truly guilty as sinners, God pronounces them “not guilty!” And, because they are declared innocent (“not guilty”), there is no remaining penalty to be paid for sin, including past, present, and future sins. This is Paul’s point in Romans 8:1, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!!”

However, as incredible as this is, it is not enough by itself. You see, in order to be *fully* accepted by God and spend eternity in heaven with Him, a person must not only be found innocent of sin, they must also be declared “fully righteous”—that is, declared to have a record of perfectly performing God’s will. It

isn't enough to just have a clean slate. There must be something on that slate—the record of having lived the *perfect* life. Jesus said at least a couple of things in His Sermon on the Mount along this line. First, He said,

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20).

And second, in 5:48, Jesus declared,

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

However, here comes the second aspect of God's declaration in justification. Not only are the accused pronounced "not guilty," they are also declared "fully righteous." In His court, God declares them as having the record of the perfect life. But again, here's the amazing thing. The person themselves are not actually righteous!! Quite to the contrary, they are *un*-righteous! They are sinful, ungodly. But, before the judgment seat of God they are *declared* righteous—as though they had lived the perfect Godward life!! Can you believe that?! Perhaps you say, "But that's too good to be true!!" Agreed. It is "too good." But it is true. For God says it!

Now, the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on justification is substantially different from this. Rather than a person being declared "fully righteous" while they are still entirely guilty, the R.C.C. teaches that God *infuses* or *imparts* a certain amount of righteousness within a person (at their baptism as an infant), essentially changing them (in part, not wholly)

from the unrighteous guilty person they were. Thus, because of this *impartation* of righteousness within them, God is able to *initially* justify them. You see, according to the R.C.C., justification is really a process, a process that is not complete in this life. However, we believe the Bible teaches otherwise. According to the Bible, a person's justification from God comes to them from outside of themselves, while they are still an *entirely* guilty sinner. The Bible also presents justification as "a once and for all" completed act, not a process! The Apostle Paul tells us so in Romans 5:1,

Therefore, *having been justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Italics mine).

There is no process in view here at all. Either a person is justified (accepted) by God entirely, or they are not.

Maybe this all seems like splitting "theological" hairs to you, but we believe the difference is absolutely critical! How so? In short, how a person is justified by God determines where a Christian's confidence (or assurance) rests before God. Is it subjective—*within* themselves? Or, is it objective—*outside* themselves? If it is *subjective* (infused/imparted righteousness), as the R.C.C. teaches, then a person can never be 100 percent sure in this life if they are totally accepted by God. Why? Because, as much as they might change, there is always sin remaining in them in this life (1 John 1:8). Thus, if their acceptance with God was dependent upon their *subjective* (indwelling) righteousness, they could never know they were accepted (justified) by God. Their remain-

ing sin would call for their condemnation! However, if their confidence is *objective* (not imparted within or infused righteousness, but righteousness *outside* themselves), their justification is unaffected by indwelling sin. Practically speaking, they can have 100 percent confidence in God's acceptance *even* as they realize sin is present within themselves!! We hope you see the difference.

How can we know that this righteous standing is not something "imparted to" or "infused within" a person? Well, as the Apostle Paul is careful to tell us in Romans 4, this righteousness is "imputed to" or "credited to" a person for their justification by God. This is *categorically* different from an "imparted within" or "infused to" idea!!

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is *credited* as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God *credits* righteousness apart from works (also see v. 3 of the same chapter; italics mine).

What this means is that this righteousness from God is something put to a person's account. It is not *put in* me or *infused to* me, but something foreign or alien to me. It is something *outside* of myself! I myself, at the moment of justification, am still totally guilty as a sinner. I am spiritually penniless within myself in terms of deserving God's approval!! Now, perhaps this will help as an illustration. Recently, a friend gave me a gift certificate they had bought for me to go online (I.e., the Internet) and purchase music at the *Apple iTunes* store. When I logged on and typed in

the code, there it was! My account had been credited (I.e., “imputed”) a particular amount. In other words, it was outside of me. It was something I never touched. Yet, even though I had never come in contact with it, the *Apple* music store is treating me as though I did, as though it was from me! (This is an illustration. Please don’t take this as a solicitation to receive more such gift certificates.)

In view of this “credited” foreign righteousness by which God justifies a person, Martin Luther coined the definition of a justified believer as “*simul iustus et peccator*”—which is Latin meaning, “simultaneous just and sinner.” It was this tenant of belief that the Roman Catholic Church condemned at its “Council of Trent” (1546). So what does the phrase mean? It means that a Christian is, at one and the same time, declared (regarded as) righteous by God while still actually being a totally guilty sinner!

Now, let’s be sure we understand that, yes, subsequent to justification (after the completed “judicial” transaction), God’s Spirit is at work within a believer to change (perfect) them into Christ’s likeness. This is what is called “sanctification.” However, the process of sanctification is not to be confused with God’s completed work of justification! The process of sanctification is just that, *a process*. And, it won’t be finished until a believer is totally transformed (glorified) in heaven. So yes, a changed life and good deeds will follow on the heels of being justified by God. To have no change that follows is an indication a person wasn’t justified to begin with (James 2:14-

26). However, *a changed life is the fruit that follows being justified, not the basis for being justified!!!* Please get this. Were it not for the completed work of justification, “God could justly send us to hell 30 years after our conversion for the best thought we had on our best day because of the sin still clinging to it.”⁶ But, because a believer is declared “not guilty/fully righteous” by God, they are, at the same time, justified and sinner—in possession of the most radical confidence before God through the remainder of this life on into eternity! J.I. Packer insightfully writes,

God’s justifying decision is the judgment of the Last Day, declaring where we shall spend eternity, *brought forward into the present and pronounced here and now*. It is the last judgment that will ever be passed on our destiny; God will never go back on it, however much Satan may appeal against God’s verdict (Romans 8:33-34). To be justified is to be eternally secure (Romans 8:30).⁷

HOW CAN GOD JUSTIFY SINNERS AND STILL REMAIN TRUE TO *HIMSELF*?

However, we must ask at this point how it is possible for God to do this. How can He declare “innocent” those who are, in fact, guilty, and how can He declare “righteous” those who are, in fact, unrighteous? After all, as John Piper states, “justice proceeds on the principle laid down in Proverbs 17:15,

‘He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the

Lord.’

We impeach judges who acquit the guilty. Our moral sensibility is outraged when wrong is given legal sanction. Yet at the heart of the Christian gospel stands the sentence: God justifies the ungodly. He acquits the guilty. That is the gospel. But how can it be right for God to do that?”⁸

A couple of primary Scriptures stand forth in answer to this question. The first is found in Romans 3:24-26,

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

From this passage, please notice several things. First, yes, it is true. In times past, God did pass over certain sins which were committed. There were people who sought God’s forgiveness in faith, and received His forgiveness even though payment for their sins had not *sufficiently* been made at that time. However, if God had simply let bygones be bygones and did not ultimately receive the full payment of punishment for their sins, He would be unjust. In other words, it would have been the corruption of justice of the highest order. “The reason God’s righteousness is impugned when He passes over sin and does

not judge it, is that sin is an attack on the worth of His glory.”⁹ If God did not *truly* punish for sin, He would, in essence, be saying, “I’m really not worthy of the trouble for perfect adoration and obedience after all!”

However, second, Paul tells us God put forth (displayed) Christ Jesus as a “propitiation” for sin. Sometimes big words like *propitiation* can scare us. However, nothing could be more important for us to understand than the meaning of this word. In a nutshell, *propitiation* is “the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift.”¹⁰ There is also the idea of “satisfaction” in it. What do we mean? Well, as we have already indicated from Exodus 34:7 (“He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.”), sin calls for punishment from God. God is angry and full of wrath toward sin. Why? Because sin is an attack upon His worth, His glory. However, in God’s amazing grace, He put forth His Son, Jesus, Who willingly went to the cross and bore the full brunt of God’s wrath against every sin of every person who would ever believe on Him. That’s propitiation! Jesus Himself *satisfied* God’s wrath against believers. As the perfect Redeemer (the God/man), Jesus gave Himself as the infinitely perfect sacrificial offering (gift) in their place. His offering was completely sufficient, you see. It more than paid the debt! In other words, Christ’s giving of Himself demonstrated God’s righteousness. God didn’t just sweep their sins under the carpet. He remained true to Himself. In His Son, He dealt with their sins fully and for all time!!!

The third thing I want you to notice from this passage is that this propitiation (resulting in justification) is for the person who has “faith” in Jesus. This removal of wrath, or satisfaction of divine justice, wasn’t made for every single person in human history indiscriminately. It was made for all those who did and would have faith in Christ.

Before we say a bit more regarding faith, a second primary passage related to how God can justify (accept) the ungodly is found in 2 Corinthians 5:21,

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This is a most wonderful text! Why? Because in it we see “the dual exchange” that takes place between a believer and Jesus Christ. On the one hand, the innocent Jesus, who “knew no sin,” became regarded by God the Father as “sin” on behalf of believers. Now, we are not to understand “made . . . to be sin” as meaning Jesus Himself ceased to be sinless. In no way did Jesus ever become sinful. He was perfectly righteous, even while on the cross. Rather, Christ Jesus bore *the due penalty* of all the sins of every believer in His body. Thus, even though Jesus was sinless, God the Father *regarded* Him (Jesus) as sinful. This is what Isaiah the prophet predicted when he said, “But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” (53:6)

That’s the first part of the transaction. Because Jesus bore the penalty believers are due, they can *justly* be declared innocent by God, free from condemnation.

However, as already has been said, to be declared “not guilty,” by itself, is not enough. They need positive godliness (righteousness) to get into heaven. Thus, we see the second part of the dual exchange in the second part of the verse—“so that we might become the righteousness of God *in Him*.” In other words, not only is a believer’s sin credited (imputed) to Christ as though He committed it (when Jesus actually didn’t), His positive perfect righteousness is credited (imputed) to them as though they had actually lived it (when they hadn’t)! Therefore, when God looks at them and thinks of them, even though there is still much sin remaining in their lives, He views them as having the complete perfect righteousness of Jesus! Why? Because they are “in Christ.” They are part of “the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). So, for a believer, it isn’t only just as though they had never sinned. It is also just as though they had lived the perfect Godward life! In response to this dual exchange, J.C. Ryle busted out with this exclamation of joy more than a hundred years ago,

Who can tell the blessedness of *the exchange* that takes place between the true Christian and the Lord Jesus Christ! Christ’s righteousness is placed upon him, and his sins are placed upon Christ. Christ has been reckoned a sinner for his sake, and now he is reckoned innocent for Christ’s sake. Christ has been condemned for his sake though there was no fault in Him, -- and now he is acquitted for Christ’s sake, though he is covered with sins, faults, and shortcomings. Here is wisdom indeed! God can now be just and yet pardon the ungodly. Man can feel that he is a sinner, and yet have a good hope of heaven and feel peace within. Who among men could have imagined such a thing? Who ought not to

admire it when he hears it?¹¹

WHY “FAITH”?

As you can see from some of the passages we have looked at (Romans 3:26; 4:5), faith (or, believing) is said to be the way, or, the *instrument* by which people receive this justification from God. Paul also put it this way in Galatians 2:16,

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but *through faith* in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified *by faith* in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh (person) will be justified (Italics mine).

You see, then, the priority of faith, don't you? The Scriptures do not teach that faith is itself a work that earns God's approval, but that faith (belief) is the “open hand” into which God places His gift of *free* grace (justification).

But why “faith?” Why not “love” or “patience” or some other virtue? Wayne Grudem gives us an excellent answer,

It is apparently because *faith* is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in faith, we essentially say, “I give up! I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer. I know that I can never make myself righteous before God. Therefore, Jesus, I trust You and depend on You completely to give me a righteous standing before God.” In this way, faith is the opposite of trusting in ourselves, and therefore it is the attitude that perfectly fits salvation that depends not at all on our own merit but entirely on God's free gift of grace.

Paul explains this when he says, ‘That is why it depends on *faith*, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants’ (Romans 4:16).¹²

This is why the reformers, from Martin Luther onward, held so tenaciously to “justification by faith *alone*.” They realized there was absolutely no other avenue by which a person could be accepted by God then by Christ *alone* through faith *alone*!

We should ask, though, whether *repentance* is part of a biblical understanding of true faith? Absolutely!! The message Jesus preached, as well as that of the Apostles, always involved a call to “repent and believe” in the gospel (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21). *Repentance* and *faith* are not two different unrelated things. They are two sides of the same coin. As a person trusts God for what Christ has accomplished, they are, of necessity, turning away from trusting any number of other things for their ultimate happiness. As John MacArthur notes,

Repentance is not merely being ashamed or sorry over sin, although genuine repentance always involves an element of remorse. It is a redirection of the human will, a purposeful decision to forsake all unrighteousness and pursue righteousness instead. . . . Above all, repentance is *not* a pre-salvation attempt to set one’s life in order. The call to repentance is not a command to make sin right *before* turning to Christ in faith. Rather, it is a command to recognize one’s lawlessness and hate it, to turn one’s back on it and flee to Christ, embracing Him with wholehearted devotion.¹³

And, as one digs deeper into the Scriptures, what’s really amazing is, they discover that this Godward repentance/faith is itself a gift from God. In other words, true faith is not something that arises natur-

ally from within a person. God Himself gives a person the very ability to turn from sin and trust Christ. Jesus Himself said it in John 6:65,

For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.

Luke recorded it in Acts 11:18,

Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.

Paul also affirmed this truth in Philippians 1:29,

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. (Also see Ephesians 2:8; 2 Peter 1:1.)

Because true faith (repentance/belief) is itself a gracious gift from God, this is also an important reason why faith is the means by which a person is justified—"in order that the promise may rest on grace!"

Therefore, dear reader, have you repented from (repudiated) your former life of sin and are you trusting in Christ completely? Does your confidence before God rest solely in that "dual exchange" with Jesus, or, are you trusting in yourself to be acceptable to God? Please be careful in how you answer this question. It is the most important question a person will answer in their entire existence. Only through faith *alone* in Christ *alone* is a person justified by God. If you don't know for sure whether you are trusting Christ alone and have assurance in your heart regarding your acceptance with God, may you not give yourself rest until you have this blessed assurance of salvation!

CONCLUSION

We hope this little booklet has helped you to have

a better understanding of the priceless gift of God's *free grace* in "justification by faith." What grace! What incredible love that God would send His Son to save sinners!! There is no more valuable and wonderful truth in all the Bible—*FREE* unmerited undeserved grace! When we come to the end of our days and stand before the judgment seat of God, where will our confidence rest? In ourselves or in this free grace? Martin Boos once told of a visit he had with a particular woman,

In 1788 or 1789 I visited a sick person, who was respected for her deep humility and exemplary piety. I said to her, "You will die very peacefully and happily." "Why so?" she asked. "Because you have led," I replied, "such a pious and holy life." The good woman smiled at my words and said, "If I leave the world relying on my own piety, I am sure I shall be lost. But relying on Jesus my Savior, I can die in comfort! If I listened to you, what would become of me? How could I stand before the Divine tribunal, where every one must give an account even of her idle words? Which of our actions and virtues would not be found wanting if laid in the Divine balances? No; if Christ had not died for me, if He had not made satisfaction for me, I should have been lost forever, notwithstanding all my good works and pious conduct. He is my hope, my salvation, and my eternal happiness."¹⁴

That woman's faith was well-placed! She realized that her justification (acceptance with God) was found *only* through faith in Christ. She had no confidence in herself whatsoever. So it will be for any person who enters heaven's gates. On that note may we conclude with the plea Augustus Toplady wrote in his great hymn, *Rock of Ages*,

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

NOTES

1. R.C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*, Tyndale Pub., p. 118
2. Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, Beacon Press, p. 33
3. From an unpublished sermon by Jonathan Edwards quoted in John Gerstner's "*The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 3, p. 512
4. Roland H. Bainton, "*Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, New American Library for Abingdon, pp. 49-50
5. John MacArthur, from an article adapted from *The Gospel According to the Apostles*.
6. This is a quote I heard from Michael Horton in a message he gave at a *Ligonier Conference* on "Justification by Faith Alone."
7. J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*, Tyndale Pub., p. 165
8. John Piper, *The Pleasures of God*, Multnomah Pub., pp. 162-163 (I am deeply indebted to John Piper for my thoughts on "justification" and highly recommend this book for further reading.)
9. *Ibid.*, p. 164
10. Leon Morris, *The International Bible Encyclopedia*, Eerdmans Pub., Vol. 3, p. 1004
11. From J.C. Ryle's sermon, *Peace Through Justification*, which I found online at www.monergism.com (This is a site I would recommend to anyone who is looking for quality articles and information related to the Christian life.)
12. Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, Zondervan Pub., p. 321
13. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus*, Zondervan Pub., p. 163
14. From *The Life of Martin Boos, A Roman Catholic Clergyman in Germany* (London: Religious Tract Soc., n.d.), p. 19, as quoted in Iain Murray's book, *The Old Evangelicalism*, Banner of Truth, p. 99