

Justification By Faith According To The Reformers

1. “The Reformers insisted that true faith necessarily, inevitably, and immediately yields the fruit of works. They argued that though justification is by faith alone, it is not by a faith that is alone.” Pg.26.
 - a. But what did and do they mean by the expression “that justification is by faith alone, it is not by faith that is alone”?
 - b. “In the Reformed view works are a necessary fruit of justification.” Pg.156.
 - c. “CHART: Fig.8:1: FAITH and WORKS pg. 156.
Reformation View: Faith ---- Justification + Works.
 - d. “When we say a man is justified by faith alone, we do not fancy a faith devoid of charity, but e mean that faith alone is the cause of justification.” Pg.129.
 - e. “Justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone. Saving faith is not a ‘lonely’ faith, having no works following as a companion.” Pg.155.
 - f. “Calvin cited Augustine again: ‘...the motion of the Holy Spirit is so efficacious that it always begets faith.’” Pg.142.
 - g. “For the Reformers the good works that flow out of justification are not good enough to meet the perfect demands of the law of God. Our best works remain tainted or soiled by the vestigial remnants of sin. Our hearts are never perfectly pure, and this impurity adds dross to the ‘gold’ of our virtues.” Pg.157.
 - h. “Our virtues remain, as Augustine declared, splendid vices.” Pg.158.
 - i. “Luther said this about our good works: ... ‘because of the restraining influence of our native corruption we do not even do our good works with a motive and in a purity that measure up to the requirements of the Law. This is why we sin even when we do good if God, through Christ, did not cover up this imperfection of ours by imputed it to us. So the sin of the good work becomes venial through the mercy of God.’” Pg.158
 - j. “Though they considered the works that flow out of justification tainted by sin, the Reformers nevertheless spoke of them as ‘good works,’ in the sense that the correspond to some degree to the commands of Christ.” Pg.159.
 - k. “Calvin says: ‘We dream not of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a justification which can exist without them: the only difference is, that while we acknowledge the faith and

works are necessarily connected, we, however, place justification in faith, not in works.” pg.159 (emp. mine)

2. “The Reformation was waged, not over the question of justification by faith, but over the issue of justification by faith *alone*. It was the *sola of sola fide* (the *alone* of *faith alone*) that was the central point of dispute.” Pg.86
3. “The Reformers insisted that the righteousness of Christ is the sole grounds of our justification. For Martin Luther justification by faith alone means that justification is by the righteousness of Christ alone, and his righteousness is appropriated by faith alone.” Pg.86
 - a. What do they mean by saying “justification is by the righteousness of Christ alone”?
 - b. “The Reformers viewed justification as being forensic (in nature, having reference to the judicial system and judicial proceedings, or the concept of legal declaration) resting on God’s judicial declaration that the sinner is counted as just or righteous by virtue of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. To be declared just on the sole grounds of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness was to them the very essence of the gospel.” Pg.44
 - c. “The doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone has since the Reformation been acknowledged by mainstream Protestants as ‘the article by which the church stands or falls,’ and the tenet that distinguishes the true from a false church.” Pg.44.

“The conflict over justification by faith boils down to this: Is the ground of our justification the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, or the righteousness of Christ working *within* us? For the Reformers the doctrine of justification by faith alone meant justification by Christ and his righteousness alone.”

“*Sola fide* (faith alone) declares that the ground of our justification is solely the righteousness of Christ. It is a righteousness that is *extra nos* (outside of us).” Pg.78
 - e. “Calvin identifies only two possible ways God can declare a sinner just: that person is justified either by his own works or by Christ’s words...

“For Calvin, God can declare a person just only if that person *possesses* righteousness. The question is, How does the person possess it? Does he possess it *inherently* or by *imputation*? This is the question of the Reformation.

“Calvin says of justification by faith: ...a man will be justified by faith when, excluded from the righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous...and we say that this justification consists in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.” Pg.101

- f. “By imparting or imputing Christ’s righteousness to us sinners, God reckons us as just. We are ‘counted’ or ‘reckoned’ just by imputation.

“This is the point of Luther’s statement that we are ‘at the same time just and sinner’ (*simul iustus et peccator*). We are just by imputation even while sin remains in us, though it does not reign in us...

“Calvin goes on to say: ‘To justify, is nothing else than to acquit from the charge of guilt, as if innocence were proved. Hence, when God justifies us through the intercession of Christ, he does not acquit us on a proof of our own innocence, but by an imputation of righteousness, so that though not righteous in ourselves, we are deemed righteous in Christ..

“This acquittal rests on the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.” Pg.102

- g. “Those who possess saving faith necessarily, inevitably, and immediately begin to manifest the fruits of faith, which are works of obedience (my emp.). The ground of the person’s justification, however, remains solely and exclusively the imputed righteousness of Christ. It is by his righteousness and his righteousness alone that the sinner is declared to be just and is really just in him.” Pg.108

4. On the purpose and spiritual benefits of Christ’s obedience as it relates to the sinner’s justification by faith, Francis Turrentin states it this way: “...what could not be found in us and was to

be sought in another, could be found nowhere else than in Christ, The God-man (*theanthropo*); who taking upon himself the office of surety most fully satisfied the justice of God by his perfect obedience and thus brought to us an everlasting righteousness by which alone we can be justified before God' in order that covered and clothed with that garment as though it were our first-born (like Jacob), we may obtain under it the eternal blessing of our heavenly Father." Pg.103

- a. "The atonement is vicarious because it is accomplished via imputation." Pg.104
- b. "The atonement also involves a forensic matter. God declares Christ to be '*guilty*' of sin after the Son willingly bears for his people sins that are imputed or transferred to him. Here is imputation with a vengeance – indeed a divine vengeance. This forensic act of imputed punishment is the very heart of the New Testament message." Pg.104
- c. "We are constituted as righteous by the obedience of Christ, which is imputed to us by faith." P.104

More on the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness providing the ground of our justification.

1. "The New Testament draws a parallel between Adam and Christ, the '*new*' or '*second*' Adam. Turrentin Comments: 'As by the offense of one (supply '*guilt*') came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one (*di' henos dikaiomatos*; supply '*the blessing redounded*') upon all men unto justification of life...' The act of one cannot be made the act of many, except by imputation." Pg.104,105
2. "Calvin concludes with respect to imputation: ...it is entirely by the intervention of Christ's righteousness that we obtain justification before God. This is equivalent to saying that man is not just in himself, but that the righteousness of Chris is communicated to him by imputation, while he is strictly deserving of punishment." Pg.105
3. "The biblical gospel stands or falls with the concept of imputation. Without the imputation of our sins to Christ, there is no atonement.

- Without the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, all the infused grace we have will not save us." Pg.106
4. "Martin Luther and the Reformers insisted that the righteousness by which we are justified is an *iustitia extra nos*, a 'righteousness outside of or apart from us,' imparted to us." Pg.107.
 5. "It is His righteousness in a sense in which it never can be ours: it is His, as having been wrought out by Him; and it is ours, only as it is imputed to us." Pg.107
 6. "Again we see that the Reformation doctrine of justification of faith alone means in its essence that we are justified by Christ and his righteousness alone, a righteousness imparted to us by faith." Pg.107,108.
 7. "The chief reason Calvin ascribe to faith the completion of justification rests on the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer. What is required for our justification is the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and *that righteousness is imputed the moment faith is present*." (emp.mine). pg.125
 8. "When God formally considers a person righteous, he does so on the basis of a *real imputation* of the *real righteousness* of Christ." Pg.130
 9. "The process of sanctification by which we are conformed to the image of Christ begins certainly and immediately upon our justification This process of sanctification is neither perfect in this life nor is t in any way the *ground* of our justification. This ground remains exclusively the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith alone." Pg.168

(All notes and quotes taken from R.C.Sroul's book "Faith Alone" – The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification. Pub. by Baker Books)

The Difference Between Rome & Reformers On Justification By Faith

CHART
Fig.8:1

FAITH and WORKS

Roman Catholic view: Faith + Works ----- Justification

Reformation view: Faith ----Justification + works

The Reformation view is justification by faith alone, justification at the moment one believes with works following justification.

The Roman Catholic view is justification by faith plus works, or justification following faith and works, or is the result of faith plus works.

(Notes from R.C. Sproul's book "Faith Alone" – The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification -- pub. by Baker Books), pg.156.