

Justification

Basic Theology Training

What happened in a moment?//

How am I responsible for what I've done?//

Can someone else take my place?//



New Horizons
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Pause and Breathe

Before you go further, take a deep breath. Make intentional space for the Spirit. Ask Him to clear distractions and open your heart. This is more than an information session—this is sacred ground. Let God speak to you through these truths.

Why This Sermon Matters

This is one of the foundational messages in the Bedrock series, a series meant to ground us in the essential truths of the Christian faith. Today we explore justification — the heart of how we are made right with God. Ryan addresses a deeply personal and common question: How do I know I'm saved? The answer is not about working harder or being "good enough." It's about understanding what Jesus has already done.

Core Teachings on Justification

1 Humanity's Need for Justification

The Problem: Humanity has a sin nature. We inherited this from Adam and Eve, and it separates us from God.

- Sin's Consequences: Sin disqualifies us from God's presence. It leads to death, both physical and spiritual.
- Old Testament Attempts: Throughout Scripture, we see people trying to atone through sacrifices, fasting, and ritual obedience. But it was always temporary.
- Reflection: Where do you see yourself trying to "atone" by your own efforts today? How does that weigh on your spirit?

2 The Meaning of Atonement

Definition: Atonement is the means of reconciliation between God and people. It was central to the Old Testament sacrificial system.

Examples: The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the Passover lamb, the bronze serpent in the wilderness.

Key Idea: Atonement is something done to cover sin and restore relationship.

Reflection: What are modern ways we try to "cover" our wrongs? How is Jesus' atonement different?

3 Jesus as the Ultimate Atonement

John 3:14-16: Jesus references the bronze serpent and says He will be lifted up to give eternal life.

2 Corinthians 5:21: God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin.

John 19:28-30: Jesus declared on the cross, "It is finished." The work was completed—once and for all.

Reflection: How does knowing that Jesus' sacrifice is complete change your daily life and your view of yourself?

4 Justification by Faith

Romans 5:1: We are justified by faith, not by works.

Galatians 2:16: No one is justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9: Salvation is by grace through faith—it is a gift.

Reflection: Do you sometimes slip into a "works mindset"? How can you remind yourself daily that justification is by faith?

5 Moving from Cultural Christianity to Genuine Faith

The Challenge: Many are cultural Christians—doing the right things, attending church, volunteering, but not truly believing.

The Invitation: You are just a breath away from genuine, life-changing belief.

Romans 10:9: Confess with your mouth and believe in your heart, and you will be saved.

Reflection: Are you living as someone who believes or someone who is simply acting Christian? What needs to change?

Dig Deeper Questions

- Where have you been relying on your own efforts rather than trusting Christ's finished work?
- How do the Old Testament stories of atonement point you more clearly to Jesus?
- What does it mean to you personally that Jesus declared, "It is finished" on the cross?
- How can you grow in living by faith rather than slipping back into a works-based mindset?
- Who in your life needs to hear the difference between cultural Christianity and genuine faith?

Recommended Next Steps

 Read Romans 3-8 slowly and reflectively.

 Read Galatians 2 and 3.




- ✓ Pray and journal about what it means to be justified by faith.
- ✓ Explore "We Believe" resources from the Church of God (Anderson) to deepen your understanding.

Final Thought

Ryan said powerfully: There's nothing you can do in your own strength to pay off or atone for the sin in your life. But Jesus re-qualifies you. You have a new legal status. You are justified!

Let that truth soak in today. You are justified by faith, not by works. **It is finished.**

Small Group Questions

- How would you explain justification in simple terms to someone unfamiliar with it?
 Read Romans 5:1-2 — What does justification bring into our relationship with God?
- Why is it crucial to understand that justification is by faith, not by works?
 Read Galatians 2:15-16 — How does Paul confront legalism in this passage?
- How does justification give us peace with God and freedom from guilt?
 Read Romans 8:1-4 — How does this passage give assurance to believers?
- What are common ways people misunderstand or distort the idea of justification?
- How should our understanding of justification shape the way we relate to other people, especially those we disagree with?