



Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

Innocent Before God

The Psalmist asks, "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?" He answers, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully" (24:3-4).

Will you be able to stand when you come before the righteous God? The only way to stand before God is to be completely innocent. The only way for sinners to be completely innocent is to be completely forgiven. The only way to be completely forgiven is by faith, for the Apostle Paul states that "a man is not justified by the works of law but through faith in Christ Jesus." For "by the works of law no flesh will be justified" (Gal. 2:16). He expresses the same truth in Romans 3:20.

To stand innocent before God, sinners must display faith and receive forgiveness from God. But what is this faith that justifies, that makes us right or righteous in God's sight? What does faith in Christ Jesus entail?

MAN BELIEVES (Testifies)

This entails a judgment of the mind (Heb. 11:6; John 11:27; Rom. 10:9). Forming the basis upon which such a judgment is made includes evidence (Acts 1:3; Jn. 20:30-31) and experience. But intellectual acceptance of truth is not adequate to save, for even demons do this (Ja. 2:19; Mk. 1:24).

The judgment of the mind must be accompanied by a commitment of the heart — the intellectual, emotional, and willful surrender of self to another. (See Acts 16:31; Jn. 3:16)

Faith that saves not only accepts the claims of Jesus to be true, but displays trust by surrendering in what the Bible calls "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). This is what results in the sinner being justified before God. Forgiven. Saved.

GOD FORGIVES (Justifies)

At issue is the fact that sin creates an estrangement from the holy God (Is. 59:2). We have broken God's perfect law (Rom. 3:23) and are subject

to the death penalty it demands (Rom. 6:23). We are objects of God's holy wrath (Eph. 2:3). We cannot stand innocent before God until this penalty is paid. Justification (being justified) is the removal of the lawbreaker's penalty by the judge's declaration upon the payment exacted by the law. Grace provided that payment at Calvary, when and where the unblemished Lamb of God suffered death on our behalf and in our place to effect our reconciliation (1 Pet. 3:18). Consequently, the righteous Judge is just (law-abiding) in justifying sinners (Rom. 3:26) because the penalty of death has been paid. See 2 Cor. 5:17-21. Jesus became a curse for us by hanging on the cross, thereby redeeming us from the curse (Gal. 3:10-13).

The sinner is justified (forgiven, saved) by Jesus' blood (Rom. 5:9) when he displays faith in Jesus' blood (Rom. 3:25). That faith takes the repentant sinner to the place where the Lord has promised to wash away and forgive sin—baptism. This is the occasion when God promises to apply the cleansing blood to the sinner (Rom. 6:4-6). When the Judge sees that faith, He pronounces His judgment that the penalty of death paid by His Son is applied to the sinner's account, thereby canceling the debt and declaring the guilty party innocent.

Arising from baptism is a sinner saved by grace, a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Forgiven. Justified. Declared 100% innocent (free from the guilt and penalty of sin). Clothed with Christ's garment of salvation (Is. 61:10; Gal. 3:27), the sinner-made-saint is set free in a new life, free from guilt, condemnation and fear.

CONCLUSION

Come to Jesus, believing His promise and His provision. In humble repentance, confess Christ to be the Lord and freely receive the wonderful grace of Jesus as you are buried with Him and raised in Him.

Jesus Paid It All by Elvina M. Hall

Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.
For nothing good have I
whereby Thy grace to claim.
I'll wash my garments white
in the blood of Calvary's Lamb.
And when, before the throne
I stand in Him complete,
"Jesus died my soul to save,"
my lips shall still repeat.

The Solid Rock by Edward Mote

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
When Christ shall come
with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found
dressed in His righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne.
On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand.

Psalm 130:3-4

If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with You,
that You may be feared.