

Justification and Theology, FFLC, October 7, 2017, Steve Mundfrom

Justification: Without regard to sin, for Christ's sake, God in the Gospel graciously declares the one who believes in Christ to be righteous in His sight.

Systematic Theology: using a system to study the Word of God.
topical study, "loci"
studying the system that exists in the Word of God.

What is the system in the Word of God? Law and Gospel.

In Luther's highly systematic view—Justification is the most important part for the Biblical system to work properly.

He said that Justification is "the central article of our teaching."

"If this one teaching stands in its purity, then Christendom will also remain pure and good, undivided and unseparated; ... but where it does not remain pure, it is impossible to ward off any error or sectarian spirit."

Quoted in *The Formula of Concord*, Solid Declaration, 3:6 [fr Luther's Works 14:37]

Before Luther: [Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei; A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*]

The early church didn't developed a doctrine of Justification; it was absorbed with questions of the Trinity, the person of Christ and the nature of fallen man.

Augustine had an entirely "transformative" view of Justification.

The Medieval "Gospel": If a man does what lies within him, God infallibly gives him grace.

Martin Luther, on Theology:

"The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner. Whatever is asked or discussed in theology outside this subject, is error and poison. All Scripture points to this, that God commends His kindness to us and in His Son restores to righteousness and life the nature that has fallen into sin and condemnation." *Luther's Works*, 12:311

Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology; Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999, page 259)

"It was the first time in all the history of theology and dogma that the decisive truth of Christian faith was concentrated in such fashion on one specific article. Not in Augustine or Peter Lombard or Thomas Aquinas or Bonaventure, to name but a few, is the entirety of theological reflection determined from such a center, however defined. Prior to the sixteenth century, the doctrine of justification never assumed a significance even remotely comparable to that in Luther. Since Augustine and his dispute with Pelagius, the doctrine of sin and grace had been the continual object of reflection, particularly in scholasticism. The doctrine had been variously developed and particular aspects obviously discussed that Luther treated in a new way. Yet such concentration on one particular article as we find in Luther is without precedent."

Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, 1520

One thing, and one alone, is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty; and that is the most holy word of God, the Gospel of Christ, as He says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25), and also, "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36), and, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Let us therefore hold it for certain and firmly established that the soul can do without everything except the word of God, without which none at all of its wants are provided for. But, having the word, it is rich and wants for nothing, since that is the word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing.

"God is the righteous Judge."

PSALM 7:11

The whole world is His courtroom.

The image of God in humanity.

We are constantly under the judgment of the Law.

Luther's "Conversion"

Justification is a JUDGMENT/VERDICT.

Jesus is the world's Redeemer

Jesus is the Mediator, God and man.

His death and resurrection form the legal grounds of God's verdict.

Romans 3:24-25

Christ is the focus of The believer's faith.

God speaks His verdict through Jesus Christ.
2 Corinthians 5:19

The Declaration of Righteousness

God judges the sinner just, for Christ's sake, without regard to sin.

Hearing in faith justifies.

Believers possess as an eternal verdict the perfect righteousness of Christ before God.

The Gospel is the Word of God

God's judgment is announced in the Gospel.

There is no other way to be assured of God's verdict.

The Word of God for the soul.

The Gospel works personally, not just generally, Romans 1:16-17.

Faith is receiving God's verdict

The judged sinner hears the Gospel.

Faith is the gift of God.
Romans 4:19-20

"The Law says 'Do this.' and it is never done.
Grace says 'Believe this.' and everything is already done."

LUTHER'S HEIDELBERG DISPUTATION (MAY 1518)