**CR05 - Righteous Records or Righteous Lives**

**Source:** <https://pastorbilllehman.org/audio-sermons/>

**Main Point 1: The Accounting Question - Is God Just Keeping Books?**

**Timestamp: [00:00:46]**

The speaker addresses a common misunderstanding about justification by faith, particularly regarding the word "counted" in Romans 4:3 and 5. Many believe that when Scripture says faith is "counted for righteousness," it means God is merely keeping divine books—accounting us as righteous while we remain unchanged. The speaker challenges this interpretation by questioning what kind of bookkeeper God would be if He falsified records to make sinners look good. He emphasizes that God's promises are "yea and amen"—when God speaks or accounts something, it becomes reality through His creative word, just as in creation itself.

**Self-Introspection Questions:**

1. Have I ever viewed justification as merely God "overlooking" my sins rather than actually transforming me?
2. How does my understanding of God's character affect whether I see Him as a record-keeper or a life-changer?
3. When I consider God's promises in my life, do I believe they carry creative power to bring about change?

**Main Point 2: The Divine Solution - Christ's Death and Resurrection Accomplished Our Justification**

**Timestamp: [00:07:44]**

The speaker explains how God can justly call sinful people righteous through Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection. Romans 4:22-25 reveals that Christ was "delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." When Christ died, all humanity's sins were laid upon Him, and when the Father called Him from the grave, it signaled that the penalty for all sins had been sufficiently paid. The resurrection was God's declaration that justice was satisfied, making it possible for Him to justify sinners while remaining just. This accomplished work 2,000 years ago provides the foundation for our justification.

**Self-Introspection Questions:**

1. Do I truly grasp that my justification was completely accomplished at Christ's resurrection, not dependent on my ongoing performance?
2. How does understanding that "justice was satisfied" in Christ affect my confidence in approaching God?
3. Am I living in the reality that there is "therefore now no condemnation" because of what Christ accomplished?

**Additional Insight: The Connection Between Justification and New Birth**

**Timestamp: [00:16:27]**

Between the second and third main points, the speaker makes a crucial connection that justification by faith cannot be separated from the new birth without doing damage to both doctrines. He explains that we receive Christ's accomplished justification through the experience described in Romans 6—dying to sin, being buried with Christ in baptism, and rising to newness of life. This personal appropriation of Christ's work makes justification both a title to heaven (through our new birth relationship as God's children) and a transformative experience that gives us a "birthright" as sons and daughters of God.

**Reflection Question:** How does viewing justification and new birth as inseparable experiences change my understanding of what it means to be saved?

**Main Point 3: The Life-Changing Reality - Christ Dwelling Within Creates Actual Righteousness**

**Timestamp: [00:24:25]**

Using Steps to Christ, the speaker demonstrates that justification involves more than accounting—"More than this, Christ changes the heart." While we are accounted righteous and pardoned, Christ also comes to dwell within us by faith, working in us "to will and to do according to His good pleasure." This indwelling presence makes us "partakers of the divine nature," with Christ becoming our righteousness from within. Like a seed planted in good soil, Christ's righteousness grows and matures in us as we surrender daily to His control, making us actually righteous, not just legally declared so.

**Self-Introspection Questions:**

1. Am I experiencing Christ's indwelling presence as a daily reality, or do I view Him as distant?
2. How am I allowing Christ to "work in me to will and to do" His good pleasure in practical, everyday situations?
3. As I grow in Christian maturity, am I seeing evidence of Christ's righteousness becoming more prominent in my character?

**Closing Highlight**

The speaker concludes with a beautiful description of justification by faith as "a marvelous, intimate love affair" where Christ becomes so intimately connected with believers that new spiritual children are born. This relationship results in God being able to say about us, "That's really what they're like—I know because I'm making them that way." The goal is not just accurate heavenly bookkeeping, but the complete reproduction of Christ's character in His people, causing the world to marvel and take knowledge that we have been with Jesus.

**Final Reflection:** Am I ready to claim this glorious experience today and become a missionary who offers this transformative reality to others?

*I encourage you to listen to his audio sermons for keen insights, deeper nuggets, and delicate nuances that he has crafted into his message.*

**Blessings,**
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