

The Science of Cultivating Faith

No. 10

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. 4:5.

This is the only way that anybody in this world can ever become righteous: first admit that he is ungodly; then believe that God justifies, counts righteous, the ungodly, and he is righteous with the very righteousness of God.

Everybody in the world is ungodly. "Ungodly" means "unlike God." And it is written, "All have sinned and come short of the glory [the goodness, the character] of God."

Anybody, therefore, who will admit that he ever came short of being like God in anything, in that confesses that he is ungodly.

But the truth is that *everybody*, in *everything*, has come short of being like God. For "they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. 3:9-18.

Then, as there is not one on earth who is not ungodly, and as God justifies the *ungodly*, this on God's part makes justification—righteousness, salvation—full, free, and *sure to every soul on earth*.

And all that anybody needs to do to make it all sure to himself on his own part, is to accept it—to believe that God does justify, personally and individually, him *who is ungodly*.

Thus, strange as it may sound to many, the only qualification, and the only preparation, for justification is for a person to acknowledge that he is ungodly.

Then, having such qualification, having made such preparation, all that is required of him to *obtain* justification, full, free, and sure, is to believe that God justifies *him*, the ungodly one.

It is quite easy for many to believe that they are ungodly, and even to acknowledge it; but for them to believe that God justifies *them*—that is too much.

And the sole reason why they can not believe that God justifies *them*, is that they are ungodly, *so ungodly*.

If only they could find some good in themselves, or if only they could straighten up and do better, they might have some courage to hope that God would justify them. Yes, they would justify themselves by *works*, and then profess to believe in justification by faith!

But that would be only to take away all ground for justification; for if a man can find good in himself, he has it already, and does not need it from anywhere else. If he can

straighten up and do better of himself, he does not need any justification from anywhere else.

It is, therefore, a contradiction in terms to say that I am so ungodly that I do not see how the Lord can justify me. For if I am not ungodly, I do not need to be *made* righteous: I *am* righteous. There is no half-way ground between godliness and ungodliness.

But when a person sees himself so ungodly as to find there no possible ground of hope for justification, it is just there that faith comes in; indeed, it is only there that faith can possibly come in.

For faith is dependence on the word of God *only*. So long as there is any dependence on himself, so long as there is any conceivable ground of hope for any dependence upon anything in or about himself, there can be no faith: so long there is no place for faith, since faith is dependence on "the word only."

But when every conceivable ground of hope of any dependence on anything in or about himself, *is gone*, and is acknowledged to be gone; when everything that can be seen is against any hope of justification, *then* it is that, throwing himself on the promise of God, upon the word only, hoping against hope, faith enters: and by faith he finds justification full and free, all ungodly though he be.

For forever it stands written, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." "Whom God hath set forth . . . to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."

This is what it is to exercise faith. Are you exercising faith? For "understanding how to exercise faith: this is the science of the gospel."

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