

EVERY TRACK EVERY WEEK
WEEK 32: Leader Discussion Guide

Declared Righteous

-Welcome!

-Intro: Thanks for being here! Revisit last week's points

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INTRO:

Hi, and welcome to Every Track Every Week. My name is _____ and I am involved with Texas FCA Motocross through _____. I've been involved with FCA MX for ____ years and my favorite thing about the ministry is_____.

This week's discussion is based upon episode #87 of our podcast "The Gospel Driven Athlete" titled, "Declared Righteous" This week, we are talking about THE key issue of the Christian faith- a doctrine known as "justification." We will try to answer the questions: What is justification? Why is justification necessary? How are we justified? And when are we justified? These are vitally important questions that help us understand and appreciate the work that Christ has done on our behalf. We will do our best to focus on the incredibly good news that, while we were dead and unable to save ourselves, because of His great love for us, God saves us by the work that His Son Jesus Christ accomplished for us!

-Ice Breaker Question: Have you ever been wrongly accused of doing something wrong? How did you defend your actions? What did you say to justify yourself?

-Question 1: What does it mean to be justified before God?

***Answer:**

- 1) To be declared righteous (right with God).
- 2) Have you ever heard that to be justified means to be declared "Just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned?" While that is right, it's really only half of the story. To have a correct view of justification, we would have to say that we are declared "just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned," AND "just-as-if-I'd-always-obeyed-the-law-perfectly-and-completely-for-all-of-my-life." This is crucial because the forgiveness



accomplished by the substitutionary death of Christ is only half of what is necessary to be seen as right (justified) in the eyes of God. God not only requires the payment of death for our sins, He also requires perfect obedience to His moral law. We see this in all throughout scripture and Christ Himself sums up our requirement of obeying the law perfectly in what is known as the Great Commandment in Matthew 22:37-40 when He says, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”* So, while Christ absolutely died for our sins and our failure to keep the law, He also lived a perfect life, obeying the law fully for us, in our place.

3) To be justified is to be counted BOTH as if we had never sinned AND as if we had always fully obeyed God perfectly.

-Question 2: Why is it necessary that we be declared righteous?

***ANSWER:**

1) We are not born with the power or ability in ourselves to perfectly uphold the law to the standard that God has placed on us. In fact, we are born in the exact opposite state- at odds with God because of our sin nature, which we inherited from our great great great grandfather Adam. Ephesians 2:1-3 says *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind”* Dead people just be dead! We were all at one time “children of wrath” This language is purposeful. It’s not as if we are simply sick and need some medicine. No. Scripture says that we are D.E.A.D. and deserving wrath. We must be born again. We must be called out of the grave, like Lazarus. We must be declared to be right with God.

2) Second, because we cannot erase our sins. We cannot pay for the sins we have committed. There is no amount of penance we can do to absolve our guilt. It is impossible to do enough good to outweigh the bad and tip the scales in our favor. We need a perfect Savior to do this for us. We need One who is fully man and fully God to do this for us.

3) And Thirdly, like we talked about earlier, it is vital that we be DECLARED righteous, because if Jesus had just died for our sins (erasing our guilt), we would be unable to earn back a positive righteousness for ourselves. If God had simply wiped the slate clean and then left it up to us to put good deeds back on there in



sufficient quantities to EARN our right standing with God, we would be completely out of luck. We must not only have our sins erased and cast as far as the East is from the West, but we must also have our lives declared to be 100% perfect and obedient.

Question 3: How then are we justified?

***ANSWER:**

- 1) Only through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- 2) Scripture lays out the incredibly good news that we obtain Christ's works simply through faith. By simply trusting and resting in the work that He accomplished, we are seen as having accomplished all of what Christ Himself accomplished. This is called "The Great Exchange" and it is the good news of the gospel. Christ trades our sins for His righteousness. He takes our sins and we get His righteousness.
- 3) Something that is vital to continue to go back to is that we obtain this righteousness through faith ALONE. Not only can we add nothing to this, but when we attempt to add anything (our efforts, works, penance, etc.) we are actually saying that Christ's work was not enough. We are saying that Christ is only but half of a savior, when we do this. We must say, like the old hymn, "nothing in my hands I bring; simply to the cross I cling."

-Question 4: When are we justified?

ANSWER:

- 1) The short answer would be that we are justified when the Holy Spirit does what only the Holy Spirit can do- which is to say, when He applies the accomplished work of Christ to us.
- 2) This doesn't happen when we walk down an aisle or when we raise our hand at church camp... This doesn't happen when we "make a decision" to follow Jesus. This happens when God breathes life into our dead lifeless bones. This happens when God gives us the gift of faith (which serves as an instrument) by which we take hold of Christ's merits and by which they, His merits and accomplishments, are counted as our own.
- 3) You could say that we are justified when God saves us. And we must not fool ourselves into thinking that we have done something to "make" God save us... we can't fool ourselves into thinking that we evaluated all of the other options out there by which we can be saved and because of our exceeding intellect, or because of our ability to weigh all the other options and from there "chose" Jesus.



To do this is to turn salvation into something that we earn. Scripture is clear that *“Salvation belongs to the Lord!”* Jonah 2:9. And God saves people because of His good pleasure.

5) I am not saying that if you walked down an aisle or raised your hand it wasn't a good thing. “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). When you heard the Gospel and the Holy Spirit stirred in you, giving you real faith, at that moment you were justified. If walking down the aisle or raising your hand was in response to the faith that the Holy Spirit put in you, then it was a great thing. Just remember that the act of raising your hand, or walking down the aisle, or even being baptized is not what saves you. Faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior is a gift from God, *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* Eph. 2:8-9a

-Question 5: How should these facts drive our attitudes, our actions and our lives?

ANSWER:

1) This causes us to cast off our pride and arrogance. When scripture shows us that God saves, because God is good (not because we are good or because we deserve it), we can be freed from the self-deception that we are better than anyone else out there. We are freed from the chip on our shoulder where we think everyone else needs to get on our level and “make the right choice” to follow Jesus... We are freed to respond to what God alone has done, with gratitude, and then to be able to legitimately love God and love our neighbor. We are freed from the burden of thinking we are better than, smarter than, or more deserving than our neighbor.

2) Knowing these things motivates us to communicate these realities to our friends and neighbors. When we see in the pages of scripture that God uses ordinary means (namely the gospel) and ordinary people (us) to communicate the message of the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation, we are freed and motivated to share that message!

-Lets pray

