

Sermon Brief, Important Cross References and Quotes, Helpful Links, Fill in the Blank Listening Aid, “How Well was I Listening Questions”

September 12, 2021

Romans 5:1-11: A Confident Church

Sermon (Not so) Brief:

1. I want us to look at Romans 5 and talk about the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This is one of the most important doctrines in the entire Bible. Someone has said it is “the article by which the church stands or falls.”
2. It’s that important doctrinally, and so I want us to take some time and think about why it’s also important practically. In other words, if this is one of the key distinguishing doctrines, what difference does it make?
3. I know at first the difference it should make probably sounds kind of obvious, and yet, looking at our Bibles and our lives it is not obvious a lot of the time. It’s possible to have the doctrine of justification by faith alone right on our doctrinal statements and yet live in a way that’s almost the opposite.
4. That’s a real danger.
5. And that’s why I want us to think about the way this doctrine should impact us. And honestly, there are probably a million different ways it should impact our lives, but I am going to give you just one.
6. But it’s a big one.
7. In Romans 5:1-11 Paul is applying the doctrine of justification by faith alone to the way we think.
8. This is one of his key most important applications. **What difference does justification by faith alone make?**
9. Number one, number two, number three, number four. **We can know God is for us.**
10. What kind of church do we want to be? A needy church, because we know what we deserve. And yet at the same time, we want to be a confident church, because we have the absolute assurance God is for us.
11. When I wrote down some statements that should be so core to how we think as a church, it was one, we need Jesus. Two, God really can change messed up people. And this is three, God is for us.
12. The key word in this text is rejoice.
13. We know that because Paul repeats it three times, and yet, while that’s one of the key words, it’s not the best translation. The word literally means boast. The doctrine of justification by faith alone results in us boast.
14. And yet the reason that may sound confusing is because we usually use this word in a negative way, because most of the time when we are boasting we are boasting in ourselves, and that’s one of the primary things Paul is trying to show us justification by faith alone should stop people from doing.
15. In chapters 1-4 Paul’s gone to great lengths to show that justification by faith alone means we have absolutely no reason to boast in ourselves, and that’s important, but the thing is, it does not mean that we have no reason to boast. And that’s important as well. We get this right, where we are boasting, what we are seeking to boast in, as a church, this becomes our church culture, and it’s revolutionary.

16. First off the doctrine of justification by faith alone shows us how foolish we are to think of ourselves as superior to others and for trying to prove that we are superior to others, for trying to justify ourselves.
17. And this is Romans 1-4.
18. Paul's like, stop! Stop trying to justify yourself!
19. Which is what most people are spending their entire lives trying to do. If you look at most people, what they do, why they do it, you can really explain them as being driven by a desire to save themselves, a desire to boast in themselves, which is part of what makes justification by faith alone so revolutionary, because the first thing it does is strips us of every reason we might think we have for justifying ourselves.
20. But the reason Paul is stripping us of all these other things we are tempted to boast in, is not because he doesn't want us to have any place to boast, but instead, because he wants us to have confidence in the right thing. **While justification by faith alone does mean we have no reason to boast in ourselves, it doesn't mean we have no reason to boast.**
21. That's Romans 5:1-11.
22. So while we don't want to be a community that places any confidence in ourselves, we do want to be a group of people who have a deep certain and confidence that God is for us because of Jesus and only Jesus, and not because of our works.
23. Which is awesome.
24. Imagine if we believed that!
25. But it sometimes is so hard for us to believe. Can I really believe God is for me? If you are a believer, you have real reasons for believing God is for you, for boasting, for exulting in that. Specifically, here Paul gives us three.
26. **One, justification by faith means we have peace with God. Two, justification by faith means we live our lives in a state of grace. And three, justification by faith means we have the hope of glory.**
27. And what difference exactly does knowing all that make on our church culture?
28. It means we are secure.
29. We should be a confident church.
30. And you know one place, where that confidence is really going to stand out? It's when the pressure is on.
31. Are we going to believe God is for us then? When we are suffering? What's our culture then?
32. Because, a lot of times when people suffer, they get really uncertain. There's a lot of fear. And that underlying uncertainty, fear of the future, impacts an entire way of living, and yet, Paul says, you know what difference justification by faith makes?
33. "More than that, we boast in our sufferings."
34. In other words, as believers we have a completely different response to the difficulties of life. Why? Because we know God has something good in store for us in the middle of those sufferings.
35. So, I wonder, do you see how practical this is?
36. Justification by faith alone means we have solid reasons no matter what for being confident God is for us.
37. And knowing that has to change our culture.
38. How?

39. Think, what would a church culture be like where the people were absolutely sure God was always committed to accomplishing something good for them even when things got really super hard?
40. Because, that's the answer.
41. I am not saying, we are always going to act like that. But that's how justification by faith alone assures us. That's what is real, and so we are sitting here as a church, and we are a people who can face the future with confidence, because we know, God is for us.
42. But it doesn't always feel like it. So we've got to help each other. How? We've got to feed each other this doctrine. When we look at ourselves and become insecure, we need to challenge each other to stop looking at ourselves, and instead look at the cross. And then when we are looking to the future and becoming afraid, we've got to encourage one another, that the cross means our future is secure, we're going to heaven, so what really do we have to be afraid of now?

Important Cross References and Quotes:

1. "The doctrine of justification by faith alone is not just one more doctrine among others, it is the article by which the church stands or falls."
2. "We were created to image God, but now we are distortions of God. We were located in a glorious universe, but now we experience it as an environment of accusation. And we will never change. Not even a little. We are the way we are, our wills are unfree, and facing ourselves honestly is unbearable. That existence is impossible to bear. What do we do with it? We shift the blame in order to justify ourselves and relieve our anxiety. The whole world is a mess, and it's always someone else's fault."
3. Romans 2:17, 2:22, 3:27
4. "On the cross, Jesus completely paid the awful penalty for our sins so that God could extend His kindness to us through the complete and total forgiveness of sins."
5. Romans 8:29,30
6. 2 Thessalonians 2:14

Helpful Links:

1. [The Shocking, Generous, Counterintuitive Wonder of the Gospel](#)
2. [Self Justification versus Justification by Faith](#)
3. [Living in Line with the Gospel](#)

**PowerPoint Presentation [Link](#)
With Fill in the Blanks [Link](#)**

Fill in the Blank Listening Aid:

1. I want to talk about the doctrine of _____ by _____ alone.
2. Justification by faith alone means we stand in the right before God by _____ instead of on the basis of _____.
3. This is not just one more doctrine among others, it is the _____ by which the church stands or falls.

4. It's that important doctrinally, and so I want to talk about why it's important practically as well.
5. What _____ does it make?
6. We can _____ God is for us.
7. We want to be a _____ church.
8. The key word in this passage is _____. That word basically means boast. The doctrine of justification by faith alone results in us boasting.
9. In chapters 1-4, Paul's shown that justification by faith alone means we have absolutely no reason to boast in ourselves, but now, he's making clear that it does not mean we have no reason to _____. We have real reasons for confidence that God is for us.
10. The first reason being that we have _____ with God.
11. Two, it means we live our lives in a _____ of grace.
12. Third, you have the _____ of glory.
13. And so what difference does having those rock solid reasons for confidence make?
14. One, it means we need to stop trying to justify ourselves. But two, it means we should start really believing God is for us, even when things are going poorly or we are feeling like failures.
15. How exactly does that become our culture?
16. We need to keep reminding each other instead of looking at ourselves, to look to the _____.
17. And we need to keep encouraging other instead of worrying about the future, to remember the cross means we are going to _____.

How Well Was I Listening Questions

That's not a great name for this section. But, I thought you could use these questions for your children. I also realized that it might be helpful for you and not just for your children. So, here are some questions you should be able to answer after listening to the message. (If you are using this with your children, please recognize that obviously not all these questions will be suitable for every age. You might have to come up with your own that will more fit their level of understanding. I tried to include a little of both. But if you can answer these questions, then you definitely will be able to do that as well.)

1. We talked about justification by faith alone. What does this doctrine mean?
2. What book of the Bible did we look at? What chapter? What verses?
3. What is the opposite of believing justification by faith alone?
4. People want to boast. What are some things people boast in? Why do you think people boast in themselves so much? What are they trying to accomplish by boasting?
5. What does Romans 1-4 say about boasting in ourselves like that?
6. If we are not supposed to boast in ourselves, does that mean we are supposed to be done with boasting?
7. Sometimes it is hard to believe God is for us. What are the three reasons in Romans 5:1-11 that justification by faith makes it so certain God is for us?
8. What is the hope of glory?
9. If we know God is for us no matter what, how does that change the way we respond when we are suffering? Why?

10. What is one illustration of how God uses difficult times for our good?
11. One of the obstacles to believing God is for us is our own sin. How can we use these verses to encourage one another that God really does love us?