

Pastor _____,

Yes I agree. Our theological convictions are very much different. It is true that I deny imputed guilt (Deut. 24:16, 2 Kng. 14:6, 2 Chron. 25:4, Jer. 31:29-30, Eze. 18:2-4, Eze. 18:19-20). Why would God make the innocent guilty by imputing guilt to them? That would mean that God wants us to be guilty when we actually are not. If the guilt has to be imputed, it is not properly ours to begin with. I believe that sinners are accountable for their own sin alone (Deut. 24:16, 2 Kng. 14:6, 2 Chron. 25:4, Eze. 18:2-4, Eze. 18:19-20, Matt. 16:27, 2 Cor. 5:10, 2 Cor. 11:15, 1 Pet. 1:17, Rev. 22:12). I believe that sinners are separated from God for their own sin (Isa. 59:2; Lk. 15:24; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 7:9, Col. 2:13). And I believe that individuals become dead in sins (separated from God through sin) when they choose to sin for themselves (Isa. 59:2, Lk. 15:24; Rom. 5:12, Rom. 5:14, Rom. 7:9, Rom. 7:11, Col. 2:13.) I believe that sinners are fully responsible for being sinners, it is their fault because it is their choice (Gen. 6:12, Ex. 32:7, Deut. 9:12, Deut. 32:5, Jdg. 2:19, Hos. 9:9, Ps. 14:2-3, Isa. 53:6, Ecc. 7:29, Rom. 3:23). I believe that each individual originates their own sin (Matt. 12:35, Lk. 6:45). And I believe that infant children are morally innocent (2 Kng. 21:16; 24:4; Jer. 13:26-27; Matt. 18:3) and have not yet "done anything" morally "good or evil" (Rom. 9:11) until the age of accountability, which is the age of reason, when they know right from wrong (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15-16), and choose to do what they know is wrong (Jas. 4:17).

And it is true that I believe we can live free from sin through the grace of God (1 Cor. 10:13; Php. 4:13; Rom. 6:18, 20, 22). And it is true that I believe God knows all that can be known, but not everything can be known yet (Gen. 6:6; Gen. 22:12; Ex. 3:18, 4:9, 13:17; Ex. 16:4; Deut. 8:2, 13:1-3; 2 Chron. 32:31; 1 Sam. 15:10, 15:35; Isa. 5:1-5; Jer. 3:6-7, 3:19-20; Eze. 12:3)

I know that your convictions are also very firmly established, so we will probably not change each others views. If you are interested in discussing any of these issues further, just let me know.

However, the one issue that I did want to bring up is "justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ". To say that we need the perfect obedience that Christ rendered to the law to be transferred to our account in order to be justified is to say that we are in fact justified by the works of the law. Christ needed to perfectly obey the law in order to be a spotless sacrifice and qualify as a sin offering (Exo. 12:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 2:8), but justification is by Christ's blood (Rom. 5:9) and by faith (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal 3:24), but not at all by the works of the law (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; 3:28; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; Gal. 5:4). Christ was under obligation to obey the law of love for Himself (Matt. 5:17; Gal. 4:4), just as God is under obligation to His own conscience (Gen. 3:22; 18:25; Job 34:10, 12), so Christ's obedience to the law cannot be a work of supererogation, there can be no "extra" obedience to be transferred to another.

I read this in a magazine regarding the imputed righteousness of Christ: "The only way anyone can be ever saved is by works. God requires that his law be fulfilled. And unless you possess perfect righteousness, you will never be justified. Now the issue is this: By whose works will you be justified? Justification by faith alone means that we're justified by the works of Christ alone."
R. C. Sproul

Are you aware that to say that we are justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ is in fact saying that we are justified by the works of the law? But the Bible says we are justified by grace, by Christ's blood, and by faith? I spoke to one Calvinist who said that we are justified by the blood of Christ but also by the obedience of Christ, that we are saved because of the obedience Christ gave to the law but also by the suffering Christ endured on the cross. My objection is that the Bible credits our salvation entirely to the suffering and death of Christ. But Wayne Grudem,

in his systematic theology (pg. 725), says that the cross was not enough. He said the cross could only forgive us, but we needed more than forgiveness. So our salvation, according to Grudem, is partly through Christ's obedience to the law, and partly by His suffering and death on the cross.

My understanding of Romans 4 is that imputed righteousness is identical with forgiveness, when God pardons us and treats us as if we were always righteous. Justification, forgiveness, and imputed righteousness are all the same thing. This was the view of imputed righteousness that King David presented (Ps. 32:1-2) and the view that the Apostle Paul presented (Rom. 4:6-8). And this understanding has been affirmed by Church history by men like John Calvin, Albert Barnes, Charles Finney, Caleb Burge, Asbury Lowrey, Moses Stuart, Michael Saia, George Otis, Gordon Olson, and others. I am sure you are interested in Calvin's remarks. On Romans 4:6-8, Calvin said, "By these words we are taught that justification with Paul is nothing else but pardon of sin." Justification is forgiveness, and imputed righteousness is when God treats us as righteous after pardoning us. Justification, forgiveness, imputed righteousness, is made possible only because of what Jesus Christ has done on the cross, dying as our substitute. Because Christ was treated as if he were a sinner for our sake (Isaiah 53:4-6), we can be treated as if we were righteous for Christ's sake (Eph. 4:32).

Just some food for thought. I appreciate you guys and just wanted to share those things with you.

Blessings,

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PS:

The word "imputed" does not mean transferred. Imputed means reckoned, accounted, esteemed, considered, etc. It is a theological error to say that "the righteousness *of Christ* is transferred to our account". If imputed means transferred, when God imputed an uncircumcised individual as circumcised (Rom. 2:26), it means that someone else's circumcision is transferred to them! The obvious meaning is that they are simply considered circumcised, reckoned as circumcised, or thought of as circumcised, but not that someone else loses their circumcision so that it could be transferred to another.

Also, some have supposed that when God looks upon a Christian who is sinning that God doesn't see the Christian sinning but "see's the righteousness of Christ" instead. But God *clearly saw* the good and bad works of the actual Christians in Revelations (Rev 2:2, 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 3:1; 3:8; 3:15), not "the righteousness of Christ". Imputed righteousness is not some scheme that fools God or blinds Him so that He no longer knows reality as it is, or no longer see's individuals as they are. That would mean God is no longer omniscient. Whenever anyone is in sin, our omniscient God sees it clearly and perfectly (Prov. 15:3; Eze. 8:12; 9:9; Mal. 2:17). But through Christ, there is pardon so that we can be treated as if we were never unrighteous, we can be treated as if we were righteous.