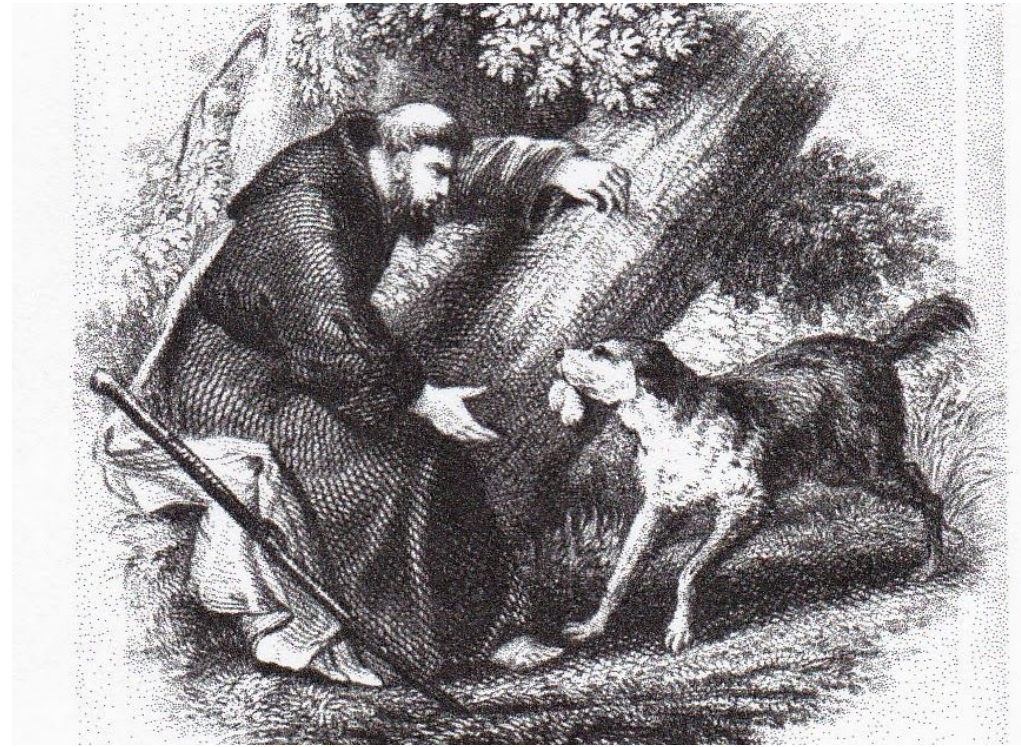


# How Can You be Right with God?

## Justification, Part 3: Grace, Merit, and Works



# The Story of John Craig (1512-1600)





# Infused Righteousness

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- A Review of Rome's Doctrine:
  - Faith allows us to receive the infused righteousness of Christ
  - Infused righteousness changes us internally and morally to do good works
  - We can do enough good works "in Christ" to merit eternal life



# Grace vs. Merit



**Operative grace** (Prevenient grace)—God moves the human to will the good.

**Cooperative grace** (subsequent grace)—God moves the human will to will the good *and* the human will wills the good.

**St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)**  
**“Father of Roman Catholic Theology”**



# Grace vs. Merit

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“[God] operates to make us will, and when we will, he cooperates with us that we may be made perfect.”

--Thomas Aquinas

- By the Cooperative Grace of God, we cooperate with God’s grace to do enough good works to merit eternal life



# Rome's Doctrine of Justification

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## Human Perspective:

**Baptism**

**Good works** by infused righteousness  
received by faith

**Justified!**

A Person's Life





# Rome's Doctrine of Justification

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## Divine Perspective:

**Operative Grace**

**Justified!**

**Cooperative Grace**



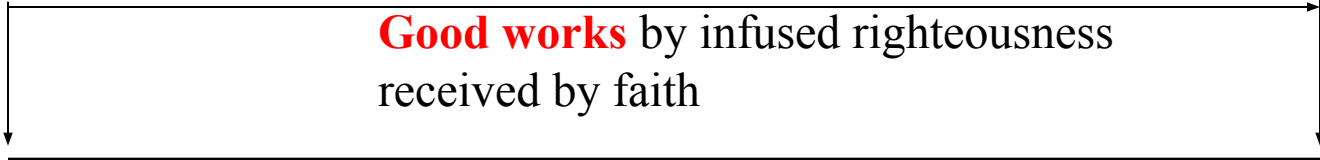
The diagram illustrates the Divine Perspective of justification. It shows a horizontal timeline. On the left, a vertical arrow points down from the text 'Operative Grace'. A horizontal arrow extends from this point to the right, with the text 'Cooperative Grace' centered above it. At the end of this horizontal arrow, another vertical arrow points down to the text 'Justified!'.

## Human Perspective:

**Baptism**

**Justified!**

**Good works** by infused righteousness  
received by faith



The diagram illustrates the Human Perspective of justification. It shows a horizontal timeline. On the left, a vertical arrow points down from the text 'Baptism'. A horizontal arrow extends from this point to the right, with the text 'Good works by infused righteousness received by faith' centered above it. At the end of this horizontal arrow, another vertical arrow points down to the text 'Justified!'.

A Person's Life

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# Grace vs. Merit

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- **Rome believes justification is Synergistic:** from the root words “syn” (with) and “erg” (work).
  - Our salvation is us working together with God.
- **The Bible says justification is Monergistic:** “mono” (one).
  - Salvation is only one working—God.





# The Treasury of Merit

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- The Treasury of Merit contains the merit of Christ + the “leftover” righteousness and good works of the saints



# The Treasury of Merit

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“This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints...In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers.”

--The Catechism of the Catholic Church



# Indulgences

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“An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church, which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”

--The Catechism of the Catholic Church



# Indulgences

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- According to Rome, sin has a double consequence:
  - Eternal punishment □ **Hell** (for unbelievers after they die)
  - Temporal punishment □ **Purgatory** (for believers after they die if they have remaining sins to pay for)

# Indulgences

- An indulgence is a ticket to **imputing** the leftover merit of the saints from the Treasury of Merit to your account, which then shortens your stay in **purgatory**





# In Christ Alone

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- **Galatians 1:9:** “if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, he is to be accursed!”





# The True Gospel

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- Salvation is
  - sola fide (through faith alone)
  - sola gratia (by grace alone)
  - solus christus (in Christ alone)
  - soli Deo Gloria (for the glory of God alone)



# Justification according to Rome

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The **Cooperative Grace** of God

+

Merit of **Christ/saints**  
(i.e. Treasury of Merit)

+

Personal merit (i.e. infused good works)



Justification.



# Grace vs. Merit

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- **Rome's Gracious Merit:**

“The merits of our good works are gifts of the divine goodness.”

--The Catechism of the Catholic Church



# Grace vs. Merit

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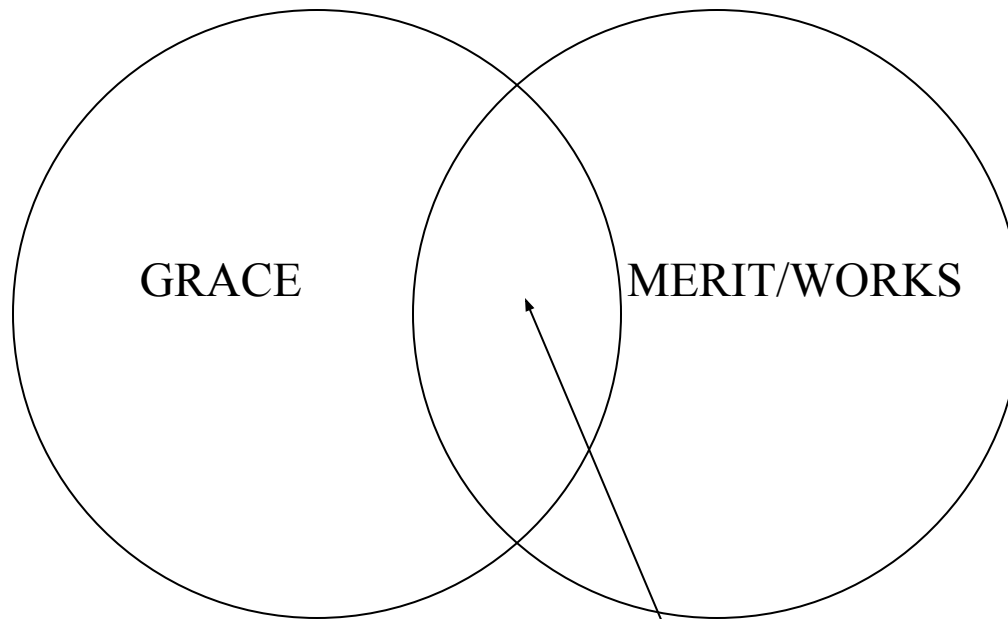
- “Gracious Merit” is contradictory.
- The principle of grace: receiving what you **do not deserve** (unmerited favor).
- The principle of works: receiving what you’ve **earned, deserved, or merited**



# Grace vs. Merit

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ROME:



**“Gracious Merit”**



# Grace vs. Merit

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Bible:



GRACE



MERIT/WORKS

Grace and Merit are **MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE**





# Grace and Merit are Mutually Exclusive

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- **Romans 4:4:**

- Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as favor, but as what is due.



# Grace and Merit are Mutually Exclusive

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- **Romans 11:6:** “But if it is by grace, it is no longer of the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.”



# Grace and Merit are Mutually Exclusive

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- **Galatians 2:21:** “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”



# Grace and Merit are Mutually Exclusive

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- **Romans 4:1-8:** Abraham was not justified by **works**.
- **Romans 4:9-12:** Abraham was not justified by **circumcision**
- **Romans 4:13-15:** Abraham was not justified by the **Law**
- **Romans 4:16-25:** Abraham was justified by **grace through faith**



# Grace and Merit are Mutually Exclusive

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“The name of Christ excludes all merit, and everything which men have of themselves, for when he says that we are chosen in Christ, it follows that in ourselves we are unworthy.”

--John Calvin



# Faith and Works

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**Roman  
Catholic view**

faith + works  justification

**Reformation  
view**

faith  justification + works





# Faith and Works

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- **Martin Luther:** “We are justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone.”
- **London Baptist Confession of Faith Ch 11, paragraph 2:** “Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.”



# Faith and Works

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Roman Catholic view	faith + works $\square$ justification
Reformation view	faith $\square$ justification + works

**Works are not the **root of** justification,  
but the **fruit of** justification**



# Faith and Works

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“If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.”

--Canon 24, the Council of Trent

Rome uses James 2 to prove justification by works:

**James 2:24:** “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone”



# Faith and Works

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- James 2 speaks of 2 different **kinds** of faith: true, saving faith vs. false, dead faith

**Chapter 2:14-20**

**dead faith**

Chapter 2:21-24

living faith



# Dead Faith

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- The Introduction to James' Scenario:
  - **2:14:** *“if someone says he has faith but he has no works, can that faith save him?”*
    - someone says, **claims or professes** to have faith
    - there is a kind of faith that saves and a kind of faith that does not save.



# Dead Faith

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- The Example:
  - **2:15-16:** *“If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?”*
    - The parallel: faith without **works** is like words of compassion without **acts** of compassion—it is false





# Dead Faith

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- The Conclusion:
  - **2:17:** *“Even so, faith if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”*
    - If your faith does not produce good works, then it is **dead** faith that cannot **save**.



# Living Faith

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- Abraham, an example of living, saving faith:
  - **2:21-23:** *(21) “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? (22) You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; (23) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God.”*



# Living Faith

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- Reasons why James is not contradicting Paul:
  1. The Bible does not contradict itself.
  2. James asserts justification by **imputation** by quoting Genesis 15:6.
  3. James points to Genesis 22, and event that happened **long after** Genesis 15.



# Living Faith

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- Paul in Romans 4: “justify” □ to declare legally righteous before God.
- “Justify” in general: “declare someone as right without actually changing the nature of the person or event.”
  - The term is not limited to God’s forensic action



# Living Faith

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- In Romans 4, Paul is speaking of being justified **before God** (forensic sense)
- In James 2, James is speaking of being justified **before other people.**
- Abraham “was justified by works” before men (not before God) because he demonstrated the **genuineness** of his faith by good works



# Living Faith

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- **2:23:** *“the scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’”*

**Genesis 15:**

Abraham is justified  
before God



**Genesis 22:**

Abraham is justified before others  
and proves that Genesis 15 is true



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The Life of Abraham



# Living Faith

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- **2:24:** *“a man is justified by works and not by faith alone”*
  - Before God, we are justified by faith alone, before others, it is not enough to say we have faith, we must justify our **profession** with **fruit**.



# Living Faith

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“We dream not of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a justification which can exist without them: the only difference is, that while we acknowledge that faith and works are necessarily connected, we, however, place justification in faith not in works...Because by faith we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, which alone reconciles us to God. This faith, however, you cannot apprehend without at the same time apprehending sanctification....Christ therefore, justifies no man without also sanctifying him.”

--John Calvin





# Practical Application

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- **Work out your salvation by obedience.**  
**James 1:22:** “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”



# Practical Application

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- **Beware of turning obedience into legalism**
  - Do not confuse your *standing* with God with your *performance* before God.
  - **Sinclair Ferguson** says, “How easily we fall into the trap of assuming that we remain justified only so long as there are grounds in our character for justification.”



# Practical Application

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- **Jerry Bridges says:** “Because we are focusing on our performance, we forget the meaning of grace. Pharisee-type believers unconsciously think they have earned God’s blessing through their behavior. Guilt-laden believers are quite sure they have forfeited God’s blessing through their lack of discipline or obedience. Both have forgotten the meaning of grace because they have moved away from the gospel and have slipped into a performance relationship with God.”



# Practical Application

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- **Whether you've had a good spiritual day or a bad spiritual day, remember where your righteousness is**
- **John Bunyan:** “Thy righteousness is in heaven. And...I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand; there, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, he lacks my righteousness, for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”