

Short item:

Justifying the wicked

- Some people think they understand what it takes to become a Christian
- They think that all they need to do is repent and believe, and they can make themselves a Christian;
 - Because God will hear their prayer and have mercy and forgive them.
- But although becoming a Christian certainly does include those things.
 - They're not thinking about the main thing
- That is: becoming a Christian isn't primarily something about what **we do to ourselves**, but about **what God does to us** on the basis of something very important.
- That 'something' being: He **justifies us** - Declares us not guilty.
- But **without a basis** to do that, He can't simply forgive us because we ask Him to.
- The question I have today is:

Upon what basis can He morally do this?

- To answer this we have to think about what morality is
 - Because justification has to do with right and wrong.

Q. How do we know what is right and wrong?

A. The moral Law of God- which reflects His very Being.

- Ok. So if God must be perfectly Just according to His moral Law, and would never go against it.

What do we make of this verse?

Proverbs 17:15

"He that justifieth the wicked,
and he that condemneth the just,
even they both are abomination to the LORD".

- Isn't that exactly the basis upon which the Gospel rests?
- God condemned the Just One- Jesus Christ
- So that He might justify the wicked- sinners like us?

Q. If, according to Proverbs 17.15, it is an abomination to God to justify the wicked, how can He justify the wicked?

And,

If, according to Proverbs 17.15, it is an abomination to God to condemn the just, how can condemn the just?

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- The answer is quite simple really
- When God poured out His condemnation upon Christ,
 - it was being poured out upon One prepared to become unjust for us.
 - He became sin for us, therefore **God wasn't condemning the Just, but He was condemning the Unjust.**
- It's the same with us.
 - God cannot just forgive us, even if we repent.
 - He would be justifying the wicked which is an abomination to Him.
- No,
- In order to forgive us, we need to be counted as righteous.
- That's the reason why Christ's righteousness clothes those who trust in Him - covers them.
- So that God counts us as if we are truly righteous ourselves
- Therefore **He isn't justifying the wicked, but justifying the righteous.**
- That's how a person becomes a Christian
 - It isn't just a simple ascent when one feels like it.
- It is the basis of God's work in the heart of a person who comes to truly understand these things, and cries out for mercy on that basis.