

# “Guilty to Not Guilty”

## The Line #6 - Justification

### INTRODUCTION

As we conclude our sermon series on “The Line” we find out how we can cross over from guilty to not guilty. Although we may be hesitant to admit it, most of us recognized before coming to faith in Jesus, that we are sinners, guilty in God’s sight. But how did we deal with that guilt? What must be done to free us from the penalty of our sins? Thankfully God has made a way for us to be declared righteous, but it came at great cost. This study examines the source and process of our justification.

**Ice Breaker (Optional):** Which do you enjoy more; reality or fictional courtroom television?

### Study Questions (45 MIN)

**Jesus took the place of guilt that we all deserve**

**Q1. Read Psalm 89:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21**

Understanding how we can move from guilty to not guilty is much easier when we first recognize that God is both just and loving (Psalm 89:14). There is nothing in God’s justice that prevents His exercise of mercy. What was God’s perfect solution to both exact justice in the judgment of our sins and also extend mercy (Corinthians 5:21)? What would you say to someone who thinks God will overlook his or her sins because He is a loving God?

**Q2. Read Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:5, Romans 10:9-10; Romans 5:1**

No matter what we do, our actions are inadequate to justify us before God. What does Romans 3:24 explain as the source of our justification? The gift of God’s grace may be free to us, but it came at a high price. What does Isaiah describe as the price paid on our behalf? In contrast, God asks what of us (Romans 10:9-10). Romans 5:1 says because of our justification we now have peace with God. What are some of the ways and circumstances in which you have experienced peace with God in your life?

**Awareness of our guilt is important.**

**Q3. Read Romans 3:21-23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8**

The first step we take in the process of our justification is to recognize our guilt. Paul addressed this point for those who knew God’s law (the Jews) and those who didn’t (the Gentiles). What did he tell them in Romans 3:24? This concept was not new. How did Solomon express the same thing in Ecclesiastes 7:20? And to those who believe they are good and are still unconvinced of their sinfulness, what does John have to say? (1 John 1:8) If you are tempted to minimize the significance of sin in your life, take a moment to recall what it required to remove it from you, and thank God for His incredible sacrifice on your behalf.

**Q4 Read Luke 18:9-14; John 5:24**

In the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee, who was Jesus addressing? (Luke 18:9) What does God require of us in order to escape the judgment for our sins? (John 5:24) How was the Pharisee evaluating his own righteousness? Does the thought that you cannot remove your own guilt make you feel frustrated? dependent? thankful? The tax collector was humble and recognized his need for God’s mercy. What steps can we take to put into action an attitude of humility? (e.g. Accept responsibility and criticism for a failure as a means of growth rather than deflecting it with excuses.)

### Wrap-Up

If we were to stand before God in our own righteousness we would be found guilty and deserving of eternal punishment. But praise God that He is not only just but also loving. Jesus took the place of guilt we all deserved so that we could take the place of acceptance we all long for.

### Memory Verse

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*  
- Romans 3:23-24 ESV

### Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:

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### Challenge:

As you enter God’s presence this week take time to acknowledge the gift He has given you through justification, and thank Him for it.

