

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of imputation. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Imputation

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins, but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

1 Through imputation, Jesus takes our sins on himself (Isa. 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:21).

- ▶ If you could be anybody else, who would you be? You can choose from history, films, books, and so on. Why would you want to be that person?

Read Isaiah 53:4-6.

- ▶ Would you want to be the person described in these verses? Why or why not?
- ▶ What is some of the suffering Jesus experienced? Why did Isaiah give such detailed descriptions of His suffering?
- ▶ Why did Jesus suffer these things?
- ▶ In what sense did Jesus want to be you? How does he "become us" in this passage?
- ▶ Does this description make you see Jesus as more or less beautiful? Why?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- ▶ How did Paul summarize the ideas of Isaiah 53:4-6?

2 Through imputation, we are credited with Jesus' righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:5; 5:18-19).

- ▶ Imagine a meter like a gas needle on a car's dashboard. One side of the meter reads Evil and the other side reads Good. Where would our needle land without Jesus?
- ▶ Imagine someone has just become a Christian. Where would the needle be?
- ▶ Imagine someone had been a Christian for several decades. Where would the needle be now?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- ▶ According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, where does the needle go as soon as we trust in Jesus? Can anything increase or decrease the position of our needle in God's eyes?

Read Romans 5:18-19.

- ▶ Why do our needles go to Good or Righteous when we believe? Who should get the credit?

Read Romans 4:5.

- ▶ According to this verse, how do we get our needle to go to Good? Why do you think Paul said his faith was credited for righteousness, rather than he was made righteous?

3 Through imputation God does not see our sins—He sees Jesus' righteousness to our credit (Phil. 3:8-9; Heb. 8:12).

- ▶ We often care a lot about other people's opinions of us. Whose opinion of you matters to you?
- ▶ Whose opinion of you should matter most?
- ▶ What do you think God thinks when He looks at us?
- ▶ If God is omniscient, can God forget anything? Ever?

Read Hebrews 8:12.

- ▶ What can God "forget"? What do you think it means that He will remember our sins no more?
- ▶ How does it make you feel to know that God "forgets" your sins because of Jesus?

Read Philippians 3:8-9.

- ▶ Before he became a Christian, Paul was one of the most moral men on Earth by human standards (vv. 4-6). Why would he say in this passage he traded it all in for the righteousness that comes from faith?
- ▶ When God looked on Paul, whose righteousness did he see?
- ▶ What does God see when he looks on us? Do you find this idea comforting? Glorious? Scary? Explain.
- ▶ How does this knowledge make you want to live?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ In what sense does Jesus "trade places" with us in salvation?
- ▶ What kind of people should we be if God sees us as clothed in Jesus' righteousness? What should we look like in our families, at school, on the field?