Intro: In 2010, the Pew Research Center (nonpartisan independent fact tank), stated there were 2.18 billion Christians around the world. ~32% of the world is Christian

Half of all Christians live in 3 countries

United States – 246,780,000 (79.5% of population)

Brazil – 175,770,000 (90.2%)

Mexico – 107,780,000 (95%)

Juneau – 2016 ~ 18,792 (60.6%) of residents claimed to be Xian

I don’t know about this, but this doesn’t represent my experience – much of the meaning of Xian has been lost

Acts 11:26 adherents to “the Way” are first called Christians

* Little Christs
* Derogatory > term embraced to this day
* Much of meaning is lost
  + Cultural/familial identity
  + Vague faith
  + Something to do on Sunday – feel good about self
* Unfortunately, this loss of meaning has infiltrated the church

To be a Christian = be like Jesus – to be a visible reality of his work on earth

* Newsboys – hands and feet

Over the next 8 weeks, we will look at what being a Christian truly means - #LikeJesus

* Danger = you will tune out “I’ve an a Xian for…I don’t need this”

If we want an awakening, it all starts here w/Jesus – Like Jesus

Over next 8 weeks – unify us into what it means to be like Jesus

* Step on toes
* Call to change thoughts, belief, heart, actions
* Uncomfortable at times – good – not about your comfort
* In this together – preaching to ourselves

Being like Jesus begins with our need for him

Beginning – God created humanity for community with him – to experience the amazing community he has with the other members of the Trinity

Our first parents (Adam and Eve) rebelled against God

* Original sin > inherit sinful nature – pervasive depravity
  + Little kids playing
* Slaves to sin (Rom. 6:20) – might do something good – wrong reason

Eternal Separation from God – God is so holy, nothing impure can be near

* “Why doesn’t everyone go to heaven?” – wrong question
* “how can a holy God allow anyone of us near him?” – wright question

Only through His divine intervention – beginning of time, made a plan to redeem humanity

* Jesus, own son, 2nd member of Trinity
  + Lived perfect life in total community with God and HS
  + Murdered, paying the penalty we deserve

This selfless act, whereby the elect are redeemed, brought back into right relationship – life like Jesus – relationship with the Father

Romans 1:17 – Justification by Faith – GK: dikiaw

*17…the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*

1. Forensic – Sinners are declared righteous before God
   * Legal act – where sinner has nothing to boast, no inherent righteousness, nothing to offer, nothing that will please God – God pardons the sinner treating as righteous
   * W/o Jesus’ righteousness, we are utterly helpless
     1. Humans are terrible law-breakers, un-regenerate wretches, sons of disobedience, spiritually dead
   * No Judge would pardon a murderer even if he had paid taxes on time
   * Nothing we can do to make us right before God

Rom. 3:24 – Justification is a gift from God, by faith (comes from God)

*24and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

1. Distinct from Sanctification
   * Some confuse the 2
   * Rom. 5:1 – past tense

*5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

* + Rom 8:1 – No condemnation – Satisfied God’s wrath, fear removed, peace w/God

*8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Justification is a 1 time event – sanct. Is a process – next 7 weeks about sanct.

* + Just. = Forensic righteousness, Sanct. = practical righteousness

1. Contingent upon an alien righteousness
   * Justified not by something within, but by something external
   * Rom. 5:8 – Simul Iustus et Preccator

*8but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

* + You and I cannot, could not become justified or righteous by ourselves, we needed God’s intervention – Jesus Imputed his righteousness

2 Cor. 5:21 – Jesus traded – Luther: Great exchange

*21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

How? By faith – gift from God

Justification is the basis for this entire series

* + #LifeLikeJesus – justified/righteous
  + Luther “if the article of justification is lost, all Christian doctrine is lost at the same time.”

Completely dependent on God – “The only thing we contribute to salvation is our sin”

* + Faith comes from God
  + Means of justification from Jesus

Life like Jesus comes from his righteousness, whereby we are justified

Remember this in communion