

1 **Transcript for James White Q and A on the Justin Brierley Show**

2

3 PAUL: Hello?

4

5 JUSTIN: Hello. Is that Paul?

6

7 PAUL: It is.

8

9 JUSTIN: Hi, Paul. It's Justin, and we tweeted each other about you coming on to
10 do a discussion with James White.

11

12 PAUL: Yes, we did.

13

14 JUSTIN: Are you good to do this recording?

15

16 PAUL: I am.

17

18 JUSTIN: All right. Okay. And how should I pronounce your surname, Paul?

19

20 PAUL: Doh-se, Paul Dohse, D-O-H-S-E.

21

22 JUSTIN: Like Dosey-Doe.

23

24 PAUL: That's absolutely correct.

25

26 JUSTIN: Okay. Now look, I'm going to introduce you as our wild card here.

27

28 PAUL: Okay.

29

30 JUSTIN: Neither James [or I have] come across what you described as the
31 Reformation progressive justification. So you have to kind of explain it first before
32 we can respond to it, if that makes sense. But we only got ten minutes as well, so
33 it's going to have to quite kind of quick back and forth between you both. Is that
34 going to be all right with you, Paul?

35

36 PAUL: Yes, it is. I just have seven questions that I want a yes or no answer for.

37

38 JUSTIN: You just want a yes or no answer question.

39

40 PAUL: Correct. And if there's any time left, we can have discussion on number
41 one.

42

43 JUSTIN: Okay. Well, look we will give that a go. I can imagine that James will not
44 be able to just respond with a yes or a no, depending on the question. I'm sure
45 there will be some clarification he wants to bring to the way you ask it probably.

46

47 PAUL: Sure.

48

49 JUSTIN: We may not get past question one is one thing, okay?

50

51 PAUL: Okay.

52

53 JUSTIN: We'll give it a go. Okay?

54

55 PAUL: All right.

56

57 JUSTIN: All right Paul. Hold on.

58

59 PAUL: Okay.

60

61 JUSTIN: So let's take another caller, and today on the program, we're getting
62 James White to respond to a few calls. Coming in, James, again, is Director of
63 Alpha and Omega Ministries. If they want to find your website, James, where
64 should they go?

65

66 JAMES: AOMIN.org, A-O-M-I-N.org

67

68 JUSTIN: And they can find things there too [podcasts etc.].

69

70 JAMES: Definitely.

71

72 JUSTIN: [If you want to] talk about what happened on today's program. But [I
73 have saved] sort of our wild card [for last]. Paul Dohse is on the line. I don't know
74 Paul. You don't either. Neither of us [have really heard of] his main issue with
75 Calvinism with [the Protestant] Reformation. He says [it promotes] something

76 called progressive justification. [And we hope] to find out what that is. Paul is on
77 the line now and has a number of questions that he wants you to answer, James.
78 So we'll see where it gets you in the last ten minutes that we got with James here,
79 Paul. And welcome on to the program. What did you want to ask James, Paul?

80

81 PAUL: I would just like seven yes or no answers to seven questions, and I
82 understand that there could be more discussion on these questions, but I just
83 want a yes or no answer that would be...

84

85 JUSTIN: Yes or no.

86

87 PAUL: Right.

88

89 JUSTIN: James, I'm sure, will try his best, but he may want to clarify your
90 questions, obviously, but go ahead.

91

92 PAUL: Okay. Number one, did John Calvin hold to progressive justification?

93

94 JAMES: You have to define what you think that means, sir. It's a very strange
95 terminology. What do you think progressive justification means?

96

97 PAUL: Well, what it means is that justification isn't a finished work in the life of
98 the believer. Justification or salvation progresses from a beginning point to an
99 ending point.

100

101 JAMES: Okay. Then the answer to your question is he most assuredly believed
102 that justification is a forensic declaration by God that takes place and is a past
103 event, and he differentiated between justification, sanctification and the entirety
104 of salvation. So to meaningfully answer the question, you have to utilize his
105 categories, and he does not believe in progressive justification. He believed in
106 both conditional and progressive sanctification. And we differentiate between
107 justification, sanctification and salvation.

108

109 PAUL: Okay. So what you're telling me, and we must move on quickly to the
110 second one, but what you're telling me is that as a Calvinist, the term
111 "progressive justification" is a little bit peculiar in your mind. Or strange.

112

113 JAMES: Well, it goes directly against the Reformation teaching of what
114 justification was because this argument was wrong, was that justification involved
115 an infusion of the righteousness of God from the sacrament. The Reformers
116 taught that justification was a forensic declaration of the part of God based upon
117 the work of Jesus Christ that says that you are right before God. And they talk
118 about the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and the imputation of our
119 sins to Jesus Christ, our sin bearer.

120

121 PAUL: Right. Okay. So you're saying that the righteousness of the believer is
122 strictly positional but not a state of being.

123

124 JAMES: State of being in the sense of being the basis of justification?

125

126 PAUL: No, I'm not talking about the basis of justification at all. I'm talking about
127 the substantive being of the individual believer. Is he righteous or not righteous?

128

129 JAMES: Well, that's exactly where we do get into the differentiation between the
130 concept of sanctification and justification [justification is a...]

131

132 PAUL: Okay. So I think the rest of the questions might help us to clarify, but we
133 only have ten minutes. So I must move on.

134

135 JAMES: Okay. Go ahead.

136

137 PAUL: Question two, in one of three classes of election--the non-elect, the called
138 and those who persevere--did Calvin teach that the called classification are
139 temporarily elected/illuminated and then fall away to a greater damnation as
140 predetermined by God?

141

142 JAMES: He believed that there were certain people who received enlightenment
143 specifically to increase their damnation, yes, but he would not say that they were
144 a part of the elect from eternity.

145

146 PAUL: Thank you. Question number three, according to Calvin, does the present
147 sin of the believer remove them from grace requiring a return to the same
148 repentance that saved them which can only be found in the institutional church?

149

150 JAMES: In the institutional church...

151

152 PAUL: Or let's say the Reformed Church.

153

154 JAMES: Well, no. Now you're using the term "grace" almost in the Roman
155 Catholic concept of that day, the falling from grace or being a state of grace or
156 something along those lines. Calvin's doctrine of sin, obviously, is that there is a
157 need for repentance experientially in the person's life and their relationship with
158 God. But if you're talking about one of the elect, that does not separate them
159 from the life of Christ. That's where they have to be re-justified or something like
160 that.

161

162 PAUL: Right, and that nails it, the re-justification part of it. So that nails it. So your
163 answer to that one is no. okay, number four, the *sola fide*...

164

165 JUSTIN: [Just before you progress with anymore] questions. I'm kind of intrigued
166 as to where this is all leading, Paul. What's, I mean, [because in a way] we're not
167 going to catch all your questions at all before we have to [leave you]. What's your
168 ultimate point? [Is it that you don't believe] Calvin was right. You think the
169 Reformation was, you know, didn't get it right?

170

171 PAUL: Well, I think fundamentally - here's what I think, and I really wanted to end
172 the crux of - the crux of this getting the answers to all seven questions that will
173 help clarify, but can we quickly get a yes or no answer to the rest of the
174 questions, and then I can answer your question?

175

176 JAMES: Well, okay. So, yeah. Okay, go ahead then.

177

178 PAUL: Okay. So where were we on? Okay, so number four, does *sola fide* also
179 apply to sanctification as well as justification?

180

181 JAMES: No.

182

183 PAUL: Thank you. Number five. According to the Reformed...

184

185 JAMES: [He wanted a yes or no answer.]

186

187 PAUL: According to the Reformed doctrine of mortification and vivification, does
188 the Christian relive their original spirit baptism throughout their lives as a result
189 of practicing the same repentance that originally saved them?

190

191 JAMES: I don't understand that question.

192

193 PAUL: Okay, let's move on. Number six, does total depravity, the T in TULIP, also
194 apply to believers? According to the Reformers, do Christians remain totally
195 depraved?

196

197 JAMES: Not in regard to ability, no. There's a new creation. So there's a
198 fundamental shift and change of spiritual life.

199

200 PAUL: Thank you. Number seven. Can a Christian do any work pleasing to God?

201

202 JAMES: Only by grace.

203

204 PAUL: So by grace, they can do...

205

206 JAMES: So yes, yes. The answer is yes because you said Christian. That means a
207 new creature in Christ [indwelled] by the Holy Spirit of God. So yes, obviously [we
208 can].

209

210 PAUL: Okay. So we can park on this a little bit with what little time we have left.
211 So what you're saying is that, yeah, so Christian can do a good work by grace. But
212 when the Reformers spoke of grace, really, what they were talking about is
213 salvation. So what you're saying is...

214

215 JAMES: No.

216

217 PAUL: Okay.

218

219 JAMES: No. [I think you have a] fundamental misunderstanding of the fact that -
220 and yes, when we talk about Reformers, [Swingly] Calvin and Luther [all had]
221 differences of opinion on minor elements [of this]. So they're all monergists. And
222 it is a very common error to think the term "salvation" is meant to be taken
223 synonymously with the elements of salvation--regeneration, sanctification,
224 adoption--which are distinguished from one another scripturally and hence,
225 theologically as well. {And so no...]

226

227 PAUL: Roughly, what percentage of the Reformers, and just roughly, just a
228 general idea. You say that there's disagreement amongst them. How many of
229 them roughly would have believed that sanctification is purely monergistic?

230

231 JAMES: Purely monergistic...

232

233 JUSTIN: And so let's just [could somebody] define monergistic?

234

235 JAMES: Okay. All right. Monergism is the idea there is one force acting to
236 accomplish something. Synergism is a cooperation of forces. So I'm a biblical
237 monergist. I believe in God, regenerates by his own power [without...].

238

239 JUSTIN: So he initiates [He delivers]. He accomplishes. It's nothing on our part.

240

241 JAMES: Exactly. [And what is being asked is, what about] sanctification? And of
242 course the difference here is, are we talking about positional sanctification? We
243 have been made holy [by the imputed righteousness of Christ]. Or are we talking
244 about the experience of being [conformed to the] the image of Christ or a - not a
245 positional but an experiential...

246

247 JUSTIN: [which is an] ongoing...

248

249 JAMES: An ongoing thing. That's why Paul uses the [participle] those who are
250 being saved, those who are perishing. [The now and the not yet]. So they had

251 discussions about these things. I can't give you percentages, but the problem I'm
252 sensing here in the questions is not using the terminologies that they did in the
253 way they did [and that leads to confusion].

254

255 JUSTIN: Can I just get a clarification here? Because we are going to have to leave
256 in a moment, Paul. But [is your] fundamental problem that you think Calvin and
257 the other Reformers [bungled it] they didn't really preach a - they didn't really get
258 the Reformation right because ultimately it's still in your view become something
259 about works or righteousness. Is that what you're saying?

260

261 PAUL: I believe that Calvin and Luther taught a false gospel, and I think that...

262

263 JUSTIN: [So they weren't] Reformed enough in your view? They didn't [go far
264 enough?].

265

266 PAUL: No. No. I think they taught a type of works salvation by perpetually
267 returning to the same gospel that saved us to keep ourselves saved, and I've got
268 as many quotes from Luther that you would want on that.

269

270 JUSTIN: I'm going to have to leave it there from you, Paul, but thank you for
271 calling in.

272

273 PAUL: You bet.

274

275 JUSTIN: Have you come across this before?

276

277 JAMES: No, not in that form.

278

279 PAUL: Wow, really?

280

281 JAMES: There are a lot of people who [want to criticize]. Unfortunately, because
282 of the nature of the questions, I realized there's all sorts of differences about the
283 subjects being discussed as far as most Reformed scholars and even history of
284 Reformation, but it is important to recognize that you've read the *Institutes [of the*
285 *Christian Religion]* written by Calvin, that he makes very careful distinctions, very
286 careful thinker, in differentiating what's called the *ordo salutis*, the order of
287 salvation, differentiating sanctification and justification, and he was very clearly
288 on what the nature of justification is. [Our standing] before God is because [of the
289 imputed righteousness of] Jesus Christ. Nothing else. We don't add to him.
290 Everything else is a gift and grace in our lives, but it does not add to what our
291 standing is before him.

292

293 JUSTIN: We're going to have to leave you there. Thank you, Paul. [for being our
294 other caller thanks to Zack and David as well].

295

296 PAUL: Okay. Thanks for having me on. Thanks for having me on, Justin.

297

298 JUSTIN: Thank you, James, for [being with us for two weeks].

299

300 PAUL: All right, bye-bye. Take care.