**JUSTIFICATION: *Going Home Justified***

In T.V. and movies, when someone gets caught in quicksand, they predictably get frantic and *try* to rescue themselves. The harder they work and struggle, the more stuck they get. Getting one’s feet back on solid ground doesn’t happen quite as we would expect.

Quicksand Rescue *Quick-Tips:*

1. STOP moving!
2. Lighten the load
3. Call out for help
4. Grab on to something *fixed*

***RE-READ: Luke 18:9-14***

DISCUSS how this quicksand situation might help illustrate the Bible’s teaching on Justification – how it goes *wrong* and how it goes *right*:

* In terms of the quick-sand rescue tips*, why did the Pharisee NOT go down to his home justified?*
* In terms of the quick-sand rescue tips*, why did the Tax Collector go down to his home justified?*

**READ also Gal. 2:16**

**JUSTIFICATION: *Toying with the Cast & Crew***

Have you ever played a game with little kids who, when they realize they can’t play the game according to its rules, just toy with the game to fit what they *can* do or play?

It’s quite obvious (and often cute) when little kids do the *toying –* manipulating a ‘game’ and its rules to fit their wants or abilities.

 As it turns out, we don’t grow out of this *toying* behavior as we grow older. In fact, Jesus points out this native *toying* in His *Sermon on the Mount* in Matthew 6.

***READ: Matthew 6:1-18***

Jesus gives some warnings against this common “toying” in these verses.

*What are some of the activities Jesus uses to picture how this “toying with the cast & crew” can happen?*

1.
2.
3.

*Within each of these activities, DISCUSS how:*

 *- the Measure,*

*- the Measured, and…*

*- the Measurer*

*get TOYED with.*

**INTRODUCTION:**

The theme for our 2024 LYA Convention is:

**“*JUSTIFIED”***

Justification is kind of a big “bible word”. It may sound like the kind of ‘term’ that belongs in a room with pastors who just want to hear themselves ‘talk smart’. But the truth is, even if we don’t use this ‘big-bible-word’ term, we all wrestle with what this term means on a daily basis. Consider just a few examples:

* *“Are we good”?*  asks one friend to another after a betrayal of confidence and an apology.
* *“Did I pass?”* wonders the 16-year old who just took their road test and is hoping to receive their license.
* “*I can’t let you in”,* says the gatekeeper to the father and son at the stadium gate. *“Your tickets are fakes.”*

*What do these different instances have in common?*

*What can this common thread teach us about what it is to be “justified”?*

**JUSTIFICATION: *The Cast & Crew***

Good standing, proper credentials, secure entry…

The status of “justified” has some key concepts underneath it - maybe like a “cast and crew” in a movie or a play. Introducing..

***The Measure*** *(the standard)*

***READ: Matthew 5:17-20***

*What does Jesus claim is ‘the measure’?*

***READ: Luke 18:9-14***

***The Measured*** *(the judged one)*

*In Jesus’ parable, who is “the measured one” (focus of the of the measure)?*

* *according to the Pharisee?*
* *according to the Tax Collector?*

***The Measurer*** *(the judge)*

*In Jesus’ parable, who is “Measurer”…*

* *according to the Pharisee?*
* *according to the Tax Collector?*

*Does an honest understanding of these “cast members” matter to a proper understanding of “Justified”? Explain.*