

WE CONCLUDE

ROMANS 3:28 • TV172B

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Romans 3:28

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Let me read my text again from **Romans chapter 3 verse 28**.

My guess is that Paul was up in years when he wrote the book of **Romans**. I don't know how old Paul was when he was converted, my opinion, is he was around 39 or 40. He may have been in his late 50's or 60's, somewhere like that, when he wrote the book of **Romans**. He was an elderly man.

He had been through a great deal and he had been taught a great deal. The first 3 chapters of the book of **Romans**, he establishes beyond the shadow of a doubt that justification is by faith. This is the key verse in these first three or four Chapters.

He says in **verse 28**; *“Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith.”* (after this teaching, after these years of experience, after an understanding, somewhat of God's holiness, and man's sinfulness, the righteousness of God's law and the strictness of God's justice; I come to some conclusions; I have reached some conclusions). Old age, certainly, ought to reach some conclusions, some important conclusions. That is my conclusion.

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I know that gray hair does not always produce wisdom, (not always), it should, but it does not always. They have a saying, “There’s no fool like an old fool” and too often that is true.

Nor does correct practice necessarily come through experience. A man who has had a lot of years of experience isn’t always right by any means. He doesn’t always do things that are right, by any means.

Experience does not always produce correct practice and years do not always produce wisdom, but it should, it certainly ought to.

When a man has been walking with Christ and searching the Scriptures and seeking the Lord, looking to the fountain of life for a long number of years, he certainly should have acquired some wisdom, some understanding. He ought to have by then, reached some conclusions.

He ought to have his foundation pretty well established. He should know where he is, whom he believes, the Lord, in whom he trusts.

The first thing that I am going to say, I am going to say to the young people. I wish you would listen carefully to me. I was glancing over this congregation. I see quite a number of young people who are under 30, about 1/3 of the congregation.

I would say this to you: Our youth ought to be spent seeking the Lord, studying his Word, searching the Scriptures. **James 1:19** says this and you can turn to it later; “*be swift to hear, (always ready to hear with an alert ear). Take heed what you hear, (be ready to hear), swift to hear, but slow to speak.*”

Be slow to speak; be slow to form opinions. I can’t warn you about that enough; be slow to form certain opinions. It’s just tragic when a man forms an opinion and builds him a house in which to live and has to spend his whole life defending an error; that’s sad.

When a man too young takes a position, now I don’t mean on the Gospel; I’m not talking about the fundamentals of the Gospel such as God’s sovereignty and man’s depravity, and God’s elective grace, the sufficiency of the atonement, and the effectual call of the Holy Spirit.

There are a lot of things; there are a lot of side issues, a lot of minors issues. But sometimes, young men and young women form an opinion too soon and therefore; they have to defend that position. They get the position; they establish a position, before they get the wisdom, before they seek the Lord and study the whole picture.

They form that position and have to spend their whole life defending it, no matter who comes along to convince them it’s wrong. They have established a position, and they have to fight for it because they spend their whole life fighting for it.

So, that is what he is saying; “*be swift to hear and slow to speak,*” and slow to form opinions and slow to come to judgment and come especially to wrath and division over what we hear.

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Now, you say that Scripture says, *“Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.”* I know it says that and that is what it means. It means, be *“slow to wrath”* that is (judgment and division) over these matters that you have heard. Don’t form an opinion too quickly.

I say this to you; there is no short-cut to spiritual growth. A man can take a crash-course in college and complete it in two years. A man can take a crash-course in electricity or mechanics, plumbing, carpentry or anything tangible, but there is no short-cut to spiritual growth. I am sorry, but it’s just not there.

You can learn the mechanics of religion quickly, but the mysteries and the wisdom of God are only learned as God reveals them. Now that is so and the sooner we find that out the better off we will be.

Knowledge comes through the facts of theology. Wisdom comes through the face of experience. Don’t ever forget that. Spiritual growth is slow. Let me show you that in the Scripture.

This is one of the things that discourage young converts. They come into the church or into a profession of faith like they enter into their profession. They are seeking to conquer it in two short years or three short years and it can’t be done.

Here, the disciples had been with the Master 3 ½ years and still the Master says in **John 16:12**; *“I have yet many things to say to you, (many things to teach you) but you can’t even bear them now.”* “You mean that I have been here 3 ½ years and haven’t graduated?” No sir!

“It looks like you could bring us the whole picture Lord and just lay it out there; let us study it and we would have it.” Hold it right there, just a minute!

I was in the Navy in World War II. I was aboard a ship called an “LST;” (that is not LSD), that is “LST.” It was a landing craft. It had 130 men, the crew of the ship, and we had a flotilla staff on board that ship.

Back in World War II they had some rapid training. They sent men to “Officer’s Candidate School,” (OCS) and they stayed there about 3 months and headed for the field. They called them “90 Day wonders.” Do you remember?

On this LST, it wasn’t a big ship, and therefore, it didn’t rate a lot of big brass, you know. All we had was a Lieutenant as the Captain of the ship, a Lieutenant, (one silver bar).

He had been through one of those 90 days; he was a 10 cent store owner and operator before the War. He went to school. He learned fore and aft, starboard and port. He learned the hatches, the gangway, the line, and all the terms. He learned the mechanics of that ship.

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He had us in trouble most of the time. On that flotilla staff, on board that same ship; I was stationed on the Conning Tower; and I was a signal-man. I was always up where the things were going on, where the ship was steered, the quartermaster, the shaft, the Conning Tower, and all the messages were sent, where the officers of the day stayed, where the Captain stayed, where the officers stayed. I was a signalmen. I sent all the messages through the light and so forth.

We had on board that vessel, an old man, Captain John McKinnon, who graduated from the US Naval Academy in the 20's and had been the Commanding Officer of a destroyer for 20 some, odd, years. He knew Navy.

He was a big redheaded, freckle-faced Irishman, with a heavy walrus beard. He was a huge man, 6 feet, 230 or 240 lbs. When he came up on that Conning Tower and took over that ship, it ran so perfectly, no problem, no trouble.

When that "90 day wonder," the lieutenant skipper came up there, the old man down stairs, it would have run aground or got in trouble, or mixed up or something, almost all the time. He knew the mechanics but the old man knew how to run a ship.

That was the difference. He acquired it; he acquired it not from books alone. We acquire a great deal from books, but not alone. The old man had his books and he had his experience. He had been everywhere that ship could go; that old man had been there.

Everything it could do, that old man had done. Everything that he could get into, he had been into it. He had been taught through the years.

It was as much difference as daylight and dark when that young skipper was on the Conning Tower and the old man was standing there leading those 12 ships, that flotilla, into an invasion or some kind of conflict. When the old man took over you could see the experience. That is what I am talking about.

I am saying this and I am saying that we can learn the mechanics of the Bible. Jay knows that this is so; and these white haired men know that this is so. So, we can learn the mechanics of religion, the mechanics of the Bible, and we can learn the facts of theology. We can learn it as quickly as we are willing to read.

But I am talking about wisdom. I am talking about the mysteries and wisdom of God. I am talking about the greatness of God and the power of God and the depths of human depravity and the covenants of God and the dealings of God and the providence of God and all of these things; that growth is very, very, slow.

We must not become discouraged. We must spend our youth and our early days being "*swift to hear,*" waiting upon God, and "*slow to speak,*" and especially slow to form our judgments and our opinions and to set our battle line.

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You see; here is what the danger, before you understand the conflict, if you set your battle line, the battle could take place over there and you be fighting over here. Do you see what I am saying?

Before you get the experience, you set your battle line. You are going to war over Christmas. You are going to war over Easter. You are going to war over whether women ought to wear hats. You are going to war over if we ought to pass a collection plate.

You are going to war over all closed communion. You are going to war over alien and emersion and you are going to war over amilleniumism. You set your battle lines on all of these things and form your opinion and God Almighty is over there moving and you are over here fighting the battle.

You are skinning your knuckles, bruising people's heads, blackening folks eyes, blooding their noses and getting nothing done. That's right, nothing done.

You see; I have to find out where the sovereign Redeemer is moving in my day and get over there. I have to find out where the issue is in my day, where the conflict is in my day, where the conflict is in my generation, because I may just be over there fighting straw men, and God is raising up somebody over here to fight the real battle for me, where the war is going on, where the issues are being tested, where the lines are being drawn, where the Spirit of God is working and Satan is attacking.

If he can engage our efforts on the sideline, he will do it. He will have you set your position, form your battle lines, set your guns up, and do all of these things, and the enemy will invade at the back door and we have missed him.

So, *"be swift to hear and be slow to speak;"* be slow to form judgments, and wrath, and set your battle lines and your opinions. I'm talking about the fundamentals of the Gospel, now. I believe, like I told someone today as we were talking; that Gospel that I learned in 1950, when Roth came here and set forth the Lordship of Christ; I believe I can say, that I preached that same message, all of these 31 years or 32 years since that time.

I haven't changed in that message but I have changed in some other things. We have learned some things. That's what I say to the young people here; don't be so swift to arrive. Please don't, for your own sake, for God's sake, for the church's sake, for the ministries sake, for the Kingdom of God's sake, because spiritual growth is slow.

I know this; I know that when the apostle Paul had Timothy circumcised; I bet you there were some fellows that really rolled up their sleeves, ready to do battle. They spit on their hands and said, "What are you doing Paul? You know that a man doesn't have to be circumcised for salvation."

Paul was acting as a wise man. Then, he went right down, and they wanted to circumcise Titus. He said, "Not on your bottom dollar; you are not going to do it."

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You see; this man Paul was wise enough to see that the issues were different, they were totally different. In this case of Timothy, he was going to preach to some Jewish people, lost Jewish people, unsaved, Jewish people, unilluminated people.

Paul just knew as soon as they found out that Timothy's daddy was a Greek, they would shut the door and wouldn't hear him, so he had him circumcised.

Down here in the case of Titus, Paul found out that these fellows wanted to circumcise Titus in order that he might be more perfectly sanctified and be more perfectly justified. Paul said, "No sir; we are justified in Christ, we are sanctified in Christ."

You don't learn that overnight. Do you see what you do when you form opinions too soon? You get this thing set and say, "we are going to do it this way, come flame or flood; that is what we are going to do."

No sir; that is not what we are going to do. We are going to preach the Gospel, come flame or flood. We are going to become all things to all men and by all means we might save some. To the Jew we are going to become as under the law, to the Gentile, as without law, though not without law, but we are under the law of Christ. Do you see what I am saying?

I would urge our young people to do this; I would urge you to lay hold on Christ. I would urge you to close with Christ; plead Christ now. I don't believe that any man ought to sit and debate whether or not he is going to bow to Christ.

The Scripture says, "*Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation.*" The Scripture says this; "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow.*" If I were here at any age tonight, and I knew something about the Gospel and God had been pleased to show me my need of Christ and Christ as my Substitute, I would lay hold on him right now.

I would cry out, "Lord; be merciful to me a sinner. Wash me in the blood. Let me have the grace to close with Christ, right now." "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,*" right now; "*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,*" right now. No sir; I would close with Christ right now.

I hear young people say this; "Well, I want to be sure; I want to be sure." Well, you can be sure of this; you are a sinner. Are you sure of that? Well, I am sure of that.

Well, you can be sure of this; there is no hope in yourself, is there? There is no hope in myself; "*in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God.*"

You can be sure of this; you cannot save yourself. I can be sure of that. I know that if I am saved God will have to save me. You can be sure of this; God sent Christ into the world to redeem ruined, lost, helpless, hell-deserving sinners, didn't he? "*Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.*" I am sure of that.

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You can be sure of this; God commands you to repent right now. Repentance is not an invitation, it is a commandment. *“God commands all men everywhere to repent.”*

God commands you to believe. I believe that faith is an invitation, faith is an exhortation, but my friends, faith is a commandment.

I really don't believe that I have a choice whether or not I will believe God or not believe God, do you? I believe that men are commanded and expected by God to believe. You can be sure of this; *“it is appointed unto men once to die.”*

Brother Frank Sweeney's little daughter, 20 years old, died last week, just like that. She had a massive coronary. She had an automobile accident and something happened in the automobile accident but she walked away, walked home, went into her room and lay down to sleep. Six o'clock the next morning her heart exploded and she is dead.

You can be sure of this that God will save all who call upon Christ. So; I would urge; I am not saying, spend your youth waiting to lay hold on Christ, waiting to lay claim to Christ, no sir, no sir, not for a moment. I wouldn't put that off until the morning, no sir, I would not.

“Now is the accepted time.” You might say, “Well; I am going to trust Christ later. I want to be sure.” Well; you study the things of which you are sure and base your confidence in Christ on those facts.

What I am saying is, when you are clothed with Christ, when you lay hold upon Christ, when you look to him; let me ask you this; how much did the thief on the cross know when he believed on Christ?

I ask you; how much did the Ethiopian Eunuch know when he believed on Christ? He heard one preacher, one time. How much did Lidia know when she laid hold on Christ? How much did the Philippian jailer know when he laid hold on Christ? How much did Zacchaeus know when he laid hold on Christ?

How much did Abraham know? Abraham knew nothing substantially about a cross. I know that there were certain things about the cross revealed to him; I know that, but as far as all of these things that we know today, he didn't have a shade of the knowledge that we have.

He didn't have a particle of the knowledge but he believed God and God called him *“the father of the faithful,”* the very father of the faithful didn't know as much as I know about the Gospel, yet his faith was greater than mine.

I'll tell you this; he believed God, he believed God. He didn't believe in a fact; he believed in a person; he didn't just believe in that person, he believed that person.

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I would urge you to do this and in other matters though, I am saying, “Let’s wait on the Lord.” Let me ask you a question: Turn to **Philippians 3**: When can a man say “I have arrived?” When can a man say I have arrived; I know; now I know, well, never?

Paul never said it. Here in the **Book of Philippians 3 verse 10** he says; *“that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”*

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect (I am not perfect; I haven’t arrived) but I follow after, if I may apprehend (or lay hold on) that for which I am also apprehended (or laid hold of) of Christ Jesus.”

“Brethren; I count not myself to have apprehended, (to arrive, to have all the answers), but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.” No; a man will never be able to say, “I have arrived.”

Secondly: Let me ask you this question; when can a man though, say, I have learned?

Turn one page to **Philippians 4**. In **Chapter 3** Paul said, *“I haven’t arrived; I haven’t laid hold upon that for which I have been laid hold of by Christ; I am not perfect.”* Paul is up in years here. This is one of his prison epistles.

But, he has learned some things now. When can a man say, “I have learned?” **Philippians 4:11** says, *“Not that I speak in respect of want for I have learned.”* I didn’t come into this world knowing spiritual things, I learned it. I wasn’t born knowing it, I learned it.

I didn’t know it the day that I believed on Christ, I learned it. I learned what? *“In whatsoever state I am, wherewith, to be content,”* and at this time he was in jail.

Newton said:

**“Content with beholding his face
My all to his pleasures resign
No changes of season or place
Would make any change in my mind.**

**I could were he always thus nigh
Have nothing to wish or to fear
A prison, would a palace prove
If Jesus would dwell with me there.**

**While blest with the sense of his love,
A palace of toy would appear,**

**And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.”**

This is what Paul is saying; look at the next verse: *“I have learned.”* How did you learn it Paul? *“I know both how to be abased.”* He had been abased, shipwrecked, stoned, beaten with rods, and scourged.

He had been hated by false brethren. He said, *“I have been through it.”* *“I know how to be abased and I know how to abound.”* He had been on the platform, in the spotlight. He had been before kings and Caesars. He knew how to be abased; he had been both places and everywhere.

“And in all things I have been instructed both to be full and to be hungered, both to abound and suffer need. Therefore, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;” brethren; that is only learned by experience. That is what I am saying.

I fear today’s easy beliefs. I fear it; I fear these once-for-all decisions. I worry when people talk about *“when I got saved, when I was saved.”*

Listen to me; don’t be upset with me. There’s a time, I know, and there is a sense in which we have been saved. The Scripture says, *“For by grace have you been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”*

There is a sense in which I have been saved by God’s eternal purpose; there is a sense in which I have been saved by Christ’s effectual purchase. There’s a sense in which I have been saved by the Spirit’s divine sanctifying call; there’s a sense which I have been saved by faith in Christ.

Let me tell you something, I’m not saved by an act of faith, but by a life of faith. Think about that a moment! I’ll show you that in **1 Corinthians 10**: Now you think about that a moment; I say that faith is not an isolated act; it is a condition; it is a state of being.

In **1 Corinthians 10** Paul talks about Israel out there in the wilderness. We studied this in Sunday school last Sunday. He said, every one of them in **verse 1**: *“were under the cloud.”* Every one of them came out of Egypt. They all passed through the sea. They all had blood on the door, right?

Verse 2: They *“were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”* They looked to Moses their leader; they submitted to his leadership.

Verse 3: *“And did all eat the same spiritual meat.”* They all did eat the manna that fell from heaven, ever last one of them.

They all drank of the same spiritual drink, the same spiritual drink from that rock which followed them and that Rock was Christ.

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How many of them entered the Promised Land? There were two: Joshua and Caleb, two of them. The rest of them perished in the wilderness.

Now, Paul said in **verse 11**: *“Now, all these things happened to them for ensamples and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come, wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”*

This is what Paul is saying. Every one of these people was privileged people, blessed people, favored people, and they had all the means of the Gospel at their disposal. The Gospel was preached to them but it did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

“Take heed brethren lest there be found in you, (not a lack of the act of faith), but an evil heart of unbelief.” We are saved not by an act of faith but by a heart of faith, by a life of faith, by a condition of faith, by a faith that lays hold upon a person and not a creed.

Don't miss him! **Colossians 1:22** says; *“He saved us if we continue in the faith.”* **Hebrews 12** says; *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”* **Hebrews 3** says; *“Whose house we are if we hold fast our profession firm unto the end.”*

1 Peter 2: verse 4 talks about coming to Christ, *“to whom coming.”* Faith's beginning is no more important than faith's ending; *“these all died in faith; these all died in faith.”*

Back to our text a moment: *“Therefore, we conclude,”* and this is when you come to drawing conclusions; this is when you come to drawing those eventful, those heaven-given, those valuable, those eternal conclusions, and those meaningful conclusions; *“we conclude.”*

Paul dealt with great things, and more great things. Somebody said, “Small people talk about other people. Average people talk about events. Great minded people talk about ideas.”

Paul was a great-minded man. He concluded some things. This conclusion, to which he came, is *“man is justified by faith.”* Knowing the holiness of God, knowing the exceeding sinfulness of sin, knowing the awful, righteousness of the law, knowing the strictness of God's divine justice, I conclude; *“man is justified by faith!”*