

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #14

Romans 3:27-31

Being right with God is not a question of our bad works or our horrible sins. Being right with God is a question of faith. By our works we are all sinners. By our works we are all guilty. By our works we are all failures. But we are not in a relationship with God by our works; we are in it by faith in Jesus Christ.

A PERSON, NO MATTER WHO HE IS OR HOW RELIGIOUS HE IS, IS MADE RIGHT WITH GOD BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND NOT BY ANY WORKS.

It is not one's religion, it is not one's works that make one righteous in God's sight - "The just shall live by faith." **Life with God is found by faith in Jesus Christ!**

THEOLOGICAL REALITY #1 – Boasting is excluded in a salvation by faith Gospel.
3:27a

Most people like to talk or boast about themselves. There is a pride in humans that likes to brag. The word "boasting" or "boast" is a Greek word very peculiar to Paul. In fact, it is used some 37 times in the N.T. and 35 of those uses are from Paul. The term means to "boast about something or to glory in something" (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 243).

The context point here is what one likes to boast about or glory in regarding what saves them from sin. The point here is that when salvation is by faith, man has nothing, in and of himself, about which he can boast. **When it comes to God's grace salvation, human merit is barred out of the very nature of the case.**

The problem with religious people is that they are proud. In fact, that is the problem with all people. C. S. Lewis made an interesting observation when he said that he heard many people admit they had a temper problem, a lust problem, an alcohol problem, but he never met one non-Christian who ever said I have a terrible vice, I have a terrible pride problem (*Mere Christianity*, p. 94).

People are so proud that there are many people who would actually rather rely upon their own self for salvation than to rely upon God to save them.

But when you have a total grace faith system of salvation, which emphasizes no religion, no works, no law keeping, the potential boasting of man is left completely out of the picture. In fact, that word "excluded" is a strong Greek word that means to "shut out." When it comes to the matter of Biblical salvation, anything that could cause man to boast is completely "shut out" of the picture. He cannot brag or boast about one single thing.

Because man is so proud, most religious people love to boast about how good they think they are. If God were to give man an opportunity to stand before Him and boast about all his accomplishments, he would. Where do you think the scales concept came from? Man's pride. Most think their works can actually measure up to equality against the righteousness of God. Most humans would love to stand before God and say - you are fortunate to have me here in Your heaven because I am such a prize catch.

But it is right here where a major theological error is made even sometimes among evangelicals. **The purpose of our salvation is not just to go to heaven ; it is to glorify God.** Salvation is of the Lord and we have nothing to boast about except Jesus Christ, His righteousness and God's grace. Boasting is completely excluded by a grace, faith Gospel.

THEOLOGICAL REALITY #2 – Law is excluded in a salvation by faith Gospel. 3:27b

Now the works of the Law are the best works one could ever do. Laws in society, laws in the Scripture are good. The O.T. Law reveals the moral character of God, which is totally pure and righteous. The commandments, ordinances, and ceremonies described in the O.T. Law are the highest and holiest that there are.

When Paul asks the question: "What kind of law?" what he means is, "What kind of law do you think will save you?" If one thinks the O.T. Law will save him, he needs to carefully read Romans 3:20 - "...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight..."

Martin Luther, the famed Reformer, wrote this: "The law of works of necessity puffs up and increases vainglory, for he who regards himself as just by fulfilling the law, doubtlessly has something of which he might arrogantly boast" (*Romans*, p. 79).

If a person wants to put himself under the Law, "he is under obligation to keep the whole Law" (Galatians 5:3). If one is guilty of breaking one commandment, one is guilty of breaking all of them (James 2:10).

THEOLOGICAL REALITY #3 – Works are excluded in a salvation by faith Gospel. 3:27c

The words of Dr. John MacArthur are important here: "The greatest lie in the world, and the lie common to all false religions and cults, is that, by certain works of their own doing, men are able to make themselves acceptable to God. The greatest error in that belief is its sheer impossibility. But the greatest evil of that belief is that it robs God of His glory" (*Romans*, p. 221).

Even our best works, when measured against God's righteousness, are but filthy rags.

Donald Grey Barnhouse said this: "When man thinks he can do something to bring himself nearer to God, he is thereby confessing his unawareness of his true distance from God. And when he thinks that God could be satisfied by something that comes from the human heart, he is showing that he cannot comprehend the true holiness of God" (Vol. 2, p. 153).

THEOLOGICAL REALITY #4 – Faith is the only way a person may be saved. 3:27d-28

Now the term “law” here is a term that refers to God’s legal method of salvation. In fact, the conjunction “for” which begins **verse 28** gives an explanation as to what the law of faith is - namely, a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.

Here is the point - **the only legal way God will declare one righteous is when a person totally relies upon Jesus Christ to save him.** God will only legally calculate one as righteous when he believes on Jesus Christ.

The kind of faith Paul is discussing is what you believe or trust in that will save you from all of your sins. The only legal way God will declare one righteous is by faith in Jesus Christ. No law, no works will cause God to judicially justify a sinner; it is only by faith in Jesus Christ.

THEOLOGICAL REALITY #5 – Faith is the only way any person may be saved. 3:29-30

Now the Jews wanted God to be their exclusive God. The reality that any person may be saved by faith in Jesus Christ was a reality most Jews did not like nor want to accept.

Religious people want something to boast about. That is why the Grace message by faith in Christ offends certain people, because there is nothing for them to brag about.

Paul makes it clear that God will save any person, regardless of religion or background through faith in Jesus Christ. Any person who will come by faith to the cross and believe completely on Christ’s finished work to save him, shall be saved. It makes no difference if one is Jew or Gentile, male or female, circumcised or uncircumcised. Whoever believes shall be saved!

It doesn’t matter what your sin - pride, immorality, murder, stealing, lying.

It doesn’t matter what your profession - minister, gambler, pimp, prostitute, businessman, housewife, truck driver, factory worker, lawyer or doctor.

It doesn’t matter what your education - grade school, high school, college or no school.

It doesn’t matter what your age or gender - young or old, male or female.

Someone has asked when can a child actually be saved? When the child can understand three things: 1) I am old enough to sin; 2) I am old enough to die; 3) I am old enough to believe in Jesus Christ.

Whoever will believe will be saved.

THEOLOGICAL REALITY #6 – Law is not nullified in a salvation by faith Gospel. 3:31

The Greek word “nullify” is one that means to make of no account, to render purposeless. Paul was preaching a pure grace/faith Gospel and some would reason, then there was no purpose for the law. If salvation is totally by faith in Jesus Christ, then a faith system makes the Law useless.

Paul’s answer is very clear - absolutely not. Truth is, a faith Gospel establishes the Law, for that is precisely why the Law was given - to show us we could not keep it. The Law was given to show us that we could not ever measure up to the righteousness and holiness of God. As Paul said, “therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). The Law of God proves we are guilty and establishes that we have all sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God.

The Law actually proves salvation must be by faith. The Law proves that man cannot ever be saved by his works for he cannot ever measure up to the holiness of God.

The main point of this text is clear - there is only one way to be right with God. It is not by our works, but believing on Jesus Christ and His work.

What is it that you are trusting in for your salvation? Your works or Christ’s work? Your goodness or Christ’s goodness? Your morality or Christ’s righteousness?

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then get over your past. Quit moaning and groaning about your past works or failures. Your past works will always leave you depressed. Your works never entered into the equation of making you right with God. The only thing any of our works did was condemn us. Your boast is in God, not in yourself, so quit looking at yourself and look to Jesus Christ, for He is the righteousness of God.