

Righteousness Through Faith (*Part Three*)

Romans 3:27-31

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." (Romans 3:28)

In Romans 3:21-31, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul sets forth the unparalleled doctrine of Righteousness Through Faith. In no other religion on earth do we find this teaching that a right standing with God is given to man as an absolutely free gift. In all the man-made religions of the world, man must somehow earn or attain salvation through his own good works. In Christianity alone, salvation is a free gift from God given only to those who place their faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient payment for their sins. Through faith in His sacrificial death on the cross and His victorious resurrection from the dead, we are able to stand before God, clothed in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 3:27-31, Paul anticipates and answers a series of questions that presses home the truth that man is saved by God's grace through faith alone apart from any observance of the Law.

I. We Will Never Be Able to Boast that We Have Done Anything to Earn Salvation (3:27-28)

27 Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. 28 So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. (*New Living Translation*)

- Because of human pride, it is hard for many people to accept that all the work was done by Christ in His atoning sacrifice on the cross.
- No person can take any credit for his or her righteous standing before God; all the glory belongs to God.
- "If righteousness came through works, then human beings could brag about what they have done [to obtain it]. But since salvation is through faith, no one can boast before God... Justification is by faith alone and does not depend at all on doing any works of the law." (*ESV Study Bible, p. 2163*)
- Why does God save us by faith alone?
 - 1) Faith eliminates the pride of human effort, because faith is not a deed that we do.
 - 2) Faith exalts what God has done, not what people do.
 - 3) Faith admits that we can't keep the law or measure up to God's standards – we need help.
 - 4) Faith is based on our *relationship* with God, not our *performance* for God. (*The Life Application Study Bible, p. 2033*)
- "Thus salvation is through faith alone (4:23-25). No matter what we do, we cannot earn our salvation. God alone saves, and His salvation is a free gift. No one can stand before God and boast of their good deeds. God is the only One who is righteous, and for this reason He should be praised." (*The New King James Study Bible, p. 1884*)

II. God's Gift of Salvation is for Everyone Regardless of Race or Ethnic Background (3:29-30)

29 After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. 30 There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. (*New Living Translation*)

- God does not have two ways of salvation: one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles.
- Paul argues that, just as there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), so "...there is only one way of salvation for both Jew and Gentile, namely, faith in Christ." (*NIV Study Bible, p. 1710*)
- God wants everyone to be saved. (Cp. 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16)
- God's plan of redemption is equally available to everyone and anyone who will place his or her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

III. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Does Not Nullify the Law; Rather, it Establishes the Law (3:31)

31 Well, then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law. (*New Living Translation*)

- The doctrine of "Justification by faith does not nullify the law but establishes it. That is, the law itself points to the fact that human obedience to the law cannot save and that righteousness can be achieved only through faith in Christ; Christ has achieved this righteousness on behalf of all who believe in him, through his perfect fulfillment of the law and his atoning death on the cross for the salvation of all who believe." (*ESV Study Bible, p. 2163*)
- The role of the law is to convict people and make them conscious of sin in their lives. (Cp. Romans 3:20; Acts 13:39; 1 Timothy 1:9-10). This role is not nullified but reinforced by the teaching that justification is through faith in Christ alone.
- Today, the law continues to serve its purpose of showing people their need for a Savior. It continues to reveal the righteousness and holiness of God and it continues to reveal the sinfulness and rebellion of man. Therefore, it continues to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ as their only hope of salvation through faith in Him. (Galatians 3:23-25)
- "As far as salvation is concerned, the gospel does not replace the law, because the law was never a means of salvation. The law was given to show men the perfect standards of God's righteousness and to show that those standards are impossible to meet in man's own power. The purpose of the law was to drive men to faith in God." (*John MacArthur, The Cross Confirms God's Law*)