

Romans

October 25, 2009

Romans Three

Romans 3:27-31

This is lesson number 12 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ”

Romans 1:16-17

Title: “Faith Establishes the Law”

Last week we concluded 3:21-26 and said that these verses are the clearest statement of the Gospel to be found anywhere in the Bible.

Today we will continue in Chapter 3 with vs. 27-31, but let’s refresh our mind and read vs. 21-31.

There are **three** main ideas in vs 27-31 that are based on vs 24-25:

“being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood through faith....”

The phrase “**by His blood**,” argues for at least **three** things that cannot be successfully refuted, at least from Scripture.

1. No **boasting** in anything that you may do or think {27-28}.
2. No **difference** in Gentile and Jew {29-30}.
3. This way of salvation **establishes** the law {31}.

But Blood? Why **blood** and not just the death of Christ?

You must understand the Sacrifice of Christ in the context of the O.T. sacrificial system. The righteousness of God and justification by faith is based on the OT, the Law and the Prophets.

Romans

Christ did not go to the cross **only** to be a public spectacle. That is what Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ" was, a spectacle.

Christ is on the cross is the **fulfillment** of everything that the law demanded.

Acts 20:28 Here Paul is saying farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus:

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

There is one way and only one way of salvation in both the O.T. & N.T. Abraham and every other OT saint was justified by faith and the Christians in the NT are justified by faith. That faith in Christ as a sufficient Substitute is our common salvation. Common? Not in the sense of cheap, but sameness.

What is the import of "sufficient?"

Romans 5:9 *"... having now been justified by His blood, ..."*

Ephesians 1:7 *"In Him we have redemption through His blood..."*

Ephesians 2:13 *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ."*

Hebrews 9:12 *"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ,..."*

What happened in the sacrificial system?

The sacrificial system was the essence of OT worship?

The hands of the guilty and repentant person are placed on the head of an innocent substitute; symbolically the sin of the guilty is imputed to an innocent substitute...

The satisfaction of the OT sacrificial system demanded the blood of a **sufficient** sacrifice. All the sacrifices that were offered before Christ were **types**. A **type** in Scripture stands for the real thing.

Romans

Adam was a type of Christ. There were things about Adam that were true of Christ. Adam was a representative person; so was Christ. {Chapter 5}

Adam willingly joined Eve, his bride, in sin; Christ took the sin of His bride which is the church. That does not make Adam honorable; Adam is the type.

Melchizedek was a type of Christ as a priest and a king.
Cf. Genesis 14:17-24; Hebrews 7:1-10.

But types are not **sufficient** to propitiate the wrath of God.

That is what is so wrong with the teaching that God actually saved anyone other than through the Gospel of redemption in the blood of Christ. The teaching that God saved the Jews under the law in OT times is exactly what Paul has proved to be impossible:

“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” {3:20}

God did not change the way of salvation on the cross; He fulfilled it!
And He fulfilled it with the precious **blood** of Christ.

In the NT, the death of Christ is always expressed in terms of the OT.
That is why any interpretation of the NT must be in terms of the OT.

When the NT begins, Matthew repeatedly states, “That it might be fulfilled...”

“And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’ ”

Matthew 1:21-23

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as He came away from the temptation in the wilderness, and what did John say?

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29

That immediately takes us to the OT sacrificial system.

What can that mean other than the fulfillment of the types has come.

Romans

One singular Lamb that was foreshadowed by all of the OT lambs, and bulls, and goats, etc.

The OT Levitical system is perfectly fulfilled in the **blood** of Christ.

Point One. No **boasting** in anything that you may do or think {27-28}.

vs 27-28 “Where is boasting then? ...” “glorying”

What can we possibly have to boast of in ourselves? The “righteousness of God,” appropriated only by the gift of faith, excludes all boasting.

All efforts to be justified by “deeds of the law” are excluded because we are “Justified freely by His grace.” Wherein is there any ground for boasting?

In Chapter 4, Paul will explain in more detail what he introduces here:

3:27 Boasting is excluded!

4:1-2 Abraham had no right to boast in his obedience!

3:28 because justification is by faith;

4:3-8 Abraham was justified by faith; not by deeds of the law, not by works

3:29-31 Circumcised {Jews} &
uncircumcised {Gentiles}
must have the same faith

4:9-17 Circumcised & uncircumcised
are children of Abraham
though faith

There is no basis for boasting in anything that you can do.

The Jew was known for his boasting in the law and circumcision.

Paul has already destroyed any hope in these outward signs that belonged to the Jew. Besides, a **true Jew** is one who is circumcised in the heart {2:29}.

Everyone will be judged by the law that they have, even those who never hear the Ten Commandments or the Gospel will be judged by the law written in their heart. Men, ever since Cain, have tried to propitiate the wrath of God by their own inventions. Righteous Abel brought a substitute that required the shedding of blood, but Cain thought he had a better way. Cain didn't want the same old way that denied to him any basis for boasting.

Romans

Describe Cain's thoughts:

"I tilled, I planted, I weeded, I watered, I sweated, I harvested, I did it! So why wouldn't God accept the work of my hands?"

What is so wrong with the "way of Cain?"

It was all about Cain!

And so it is even now. The gospel says "trust the righteousness of God."

Man says, "No, you must also belong to this or that church; you must be baptized in order to be saved; you must follow this or that list of do's and don'ts.

The same with the Judaizers in Acts 15 and Galatians.

Natural man thinks Salvation can't be as simple as trusting in Christ alone.

How can they take any credit in that?

So they choose to follow what Jude called, "The way of Cain."

In the Gospel, Boasting is excluded!

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, it is not the outward keeping of the letter of the law that meets the intent of the law. The law must be responded to by faith.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6 The believer does not boast in his obedience, but has a desire in his inmost being to please God.

The statement of the doctrine of justification by faith alone is plainly stated in vs 28;

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified {declared righteous} by faith apart from the deeds of the law."

If a person understands that justification is a **declaration** that a person is righteous and that Justification is granted **freely by grace**, what then can they boast in?

Dr. Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School, autographs his books with 1 Corinthians 4:7, ***"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you glory {boast} as if you had not received it?"***

And so, **Point One**: No boasting in anything that you may do or think.

Romans

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Point Two. There is no difference in Gentile and Jew {29-30}.

vs 29-30 Paul has already established that there is no difference between Gentile and Jew: everyone is under the wrath of God. Now he shows that the propitiation of God's wrath is the same for Gentile and Jew.

There is one God so He must be the God of Gentile and Jew.

If it were true that any person {the Jew} could be saved by the law, then the Gentile would have no hope of being saved. Why? Because the Gentile did not have the law. There is only one God and only one salvation and that is in the gospel of God, the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.

What disturbs me the most about Postmodernism is that it allows that there is salvation in other religions, If that could be true, then the sacrifice of the blood of Christ would have been unnecessary. "Ah," they say, "You can believe the Christian Gospel if that's what you choose to believe, we are more sophisticated than that, we are not so narrow-minded, surely other sincere religious beliefs will be accepted by God."

In the Day of Judgement they will have to tell the Lord Jesus that He went to a lot of trouble, but it was not, after all, the only way to be right with God.

He will say to them, "***I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.***" Matthew 7:21 I am well aware that the context of that verse is false professors of Christ, but He will say the same to others who deny His uniqueness and sufficiency as the Christ.

"It is hard to see how by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul could have expressed the "no distinction" truth in clearer language. It takes but little imagination to sense how the entire Roman congregation, gathered for worship in one meeting place or in several, must have rejoiced when this epistle, with its emphasis on unity {Cf. Ephesians 2:11-17} was read. The notion according to which even today God recognizes two groups in which He takes special delight - the Jews and the church - finds no support either here or elsewhere in Scripture. What does find support is Paul's passage found in Ephesians 4:4-6." Hendriksen

Romans

Dispensational eschatology makes a separation between the Jews and the Church; never to be joined in one body.

A brief comment on vs 30: "... circumcised **by** faith and the uncircumcised **through** faith..." Is there a subtle point to be made in the two different words? I will trust the scholarship of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones who says that there is no material difference.

And so, **Point Two:** No **difference** in Gentile and Jew which means every person in the world. There is One God, therefore there can only be one way of justification.

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Point Three: This way of salvation **establishes** the law {31}.

vs 31 Has the law been abolished? Does faith nullify the law?

Some people, might conclude that since the law plays no part in justification, then the law has no place in salvation. To the contrary, faith fulfills the law!

Since by law-works no mortal will ever be justified {3:20}, and since it was apart from the law that a righteousness from God has been revealed {21}, and since, therefore, a person is justified by faith, apart from the works of the law {28}, are we depriving the law of its value? Do we invalidate the law through our insistence on faith? Paul's answer is abrupt and decisive:

"By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law."

There were those to whom Paul is addressing then, as there are now, saying, "Let us do away with the law. All we need is faith." ***"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound." "God forbid..."***

In verse 31, "...we establish the law." is contrasted with the "law of faith {27}.

The "law of faith" means the "**principle**" of faith; **faith principle** as opposed to **law principle**.

Romans

In what way, Paul, do you uphold the law by your emphasis on justification by faith? Cf. Romans 3:30; 7:7-13; Galatians 2:19; 3: 21, 24.

How then has the Gospel established the law?

In seven ways: {Lloyd-Jones}

1. It satisfies the holiness and righteousness of God that the law demanded.
2. The cross confirms everything that God said in the law about sin.
3. The cross satisfies the wrath of God through propitiation.
4. The Gospel answers our utter and complete helplessness to satisfy the law.
5. The Gospel shows that the OT sacrifices were only types that pointed to Christ.
6. The blood of Christ satisfies the law which says without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.
7. The Gospel proves that the law was essentially spiritual; “To love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength,” not with “deeds of the law,” but with my heart.

Nothing establishes the law more than the gospel of God. God has given the moral code to men, first in their hearts, and then to Israel through Moses.

And so the law is **established** in a Man who actually did keep the law. Not for Himself, but for those given to Him by the Father from before the foundation of the world.

And if, by God’s grace, you are able to believe that, Boasting is excluded!

The doctrines of (a) Justification by faith, hence salvation, by faith and (b) that of the usefulness of God’s law, coincide beautifully; for “through the law comes consciousness of sin.” When this consciousness of sin is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, it causes one to cry out for mercy and deliverance. That deliverance is fully supplied when the sinner surrenders his life to God; that is, when by genuine God-given faith, he repents and receives the Lord Jesus Christ, and he can say: “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.”

Romans

When John Bunyan read Romans 3:24, it was as if he heard God saying to his deeply troubled, guilt-stricken soul, “Sinner, thou thinkest that because of thy sins and infirmities I cannot save thy soul, but behold my Son is by me, and upon Him I look, and not upon thee, and I will deal with thee according as I am pleased with Him.”

Is it possible that we have become so accustomed to the expression “forgiveness of sins” that it has lost most of its meaning for us? Do we meditate at times on the fact that our sins are infinitely more heinous in the sight of God than they are to us? That He nevertheless blots them out once and for all, lovingly assuring us, “I will forgive your iniquity, and your sin will I remember no more?” But to do this He had to punish those sins in His Son, the One whom He loved as God alone can love!

The ground of our justification is not in our own merit, nor in our faith, nor in our evangelical obedience, nor in the work of Christ in us, but in His work for us.

But justification is much more than forgiveness. The heavenly Father, having canceled our sin debt, then as it were lovingly throws His arms around us {Cf. Luke 15:20}, and tells each of His pardoned and justified ones, “You are my son, my daughter, my very own. And being my child, you are also My heir {8:17}.” God treats each one of His children as though they were an only child.

Think of it, “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.”
{Ephesians 5:25}

As we discussed in the last lesson, the heavy penalty for sin was not paid by Christ immediately upon the entrance of sin into the world, and that throughout the period of the OT people were justified by faith, and the punishment of their sin was passed over. But the indulgence of God of the sins of His people could not be suspended indefinitely. Divine justice had to be satisfied. There was the charge that God Himself was not just. Adam and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Rahab and Esther and David and countless others were dead and yet were at peace with God and their sin had not yet been punished, either in themselves or in an acceptable Substitute. But now, God has done it! The Christ has come, the law has been satisfied, the Christ has died! “God did not spare His own son but gave Him up for us all” {Romans 8:31}. God did this “to demonstrate His justice in the present time, that He might be just and the One who justifies the person who has faith in Jesus” {3:24-31}.

Romans

The atonement does not consist only in a display to others of the divine justice. This is one of its results; but it is such a display only by being a satisfaction to the justice of God. Christ on the cross is not a symbol, or an example, or an illustration, but an actual satisfaction. {26}

All true doctrine tends to humble men and exalt God; and all true religion is characterized by humility and reverence. {27}

One test for any doctrine as to its truth is to ask who gets the glory, man or God?

That is enough for today:

1. No **boasting** in anything that you may do or think {27-28}.
2. No **difference** in Gentile and Jew {29-30}.
3. This way of salvation **establishes** the law {31}.

Next lesson is on Romans: 4: 1-8