



(For access to all available commentaries and sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

# Romans

**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Romans 3:28**

"Therefore." Based on what precedes this statement, Paul will now make an absolute and exclusive claim. It is a tenet which defines true Christianity and separates it from all other religions. It is also a point of separation between the true faith and that which is heretical. Paul couldn't be clearer in what he is saying. Our justification comes from faith in the merits of Christ Jesus alone. No deeds of the law (note that "law" has no definite article in the Greek, thus it says "deeds of law") have any part in our justification. We are justified and declared righteous by faith in Christ and by faith in Christ alone.

Martin Luther called this tenet of justification by faith the point upon which the church either stood or fell - and he was right. Any denomination or person who proclaims anything other than this tenet is not a Christian entity because it is a foundational principle of the work of Christ. Only He was born sinless and lived the law perfectly. In contrast, we have both inherited sin and have added further sins to our account before God. Therefore, to claim that we somehow participate in our justification would call into question the righteousness of God and malign His holiness.

To deny justification by faith alone would be comparable to denying that Jesus was born of a virgin or that the Bible wasn't divinely inspired. Either tenet being false would negate the truth of the Christian faith. The same is true with this one. It is this concept above all others which caused the final break from the Roman Catholic Church during the Protestant reformation.

Life application: What does your denomination teach about justification by faith alone? What does your preacher believe concerning this tenet? Go find out and if they differ from Paul's words in today's verse, then you need to find another place to worship. This is serious stuff.

**Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, Romans 3:29**

The case against favoritism, prejudice, and presumption has been fully substantiated. The Bible makes it perfectly clear that there is one God. The great affirmation of this fact is quoted by observant Jews around the world each and every day -

"Here O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." Deuteronomy 6:4

Jesus restated the truth of Deuteronomy 6:4 when He cited it in Mark 12:29. The concept of there being but one God is reaffirmed repeatedly throughout the rest of the New Testament as well. If there is only one God, then He must be the God of all. This fact is being presented in order to establish what is already painfully obvious, but which Paul will clarify anyway in the following verse.

The Jewish nation traces its ancestry back to Abraham through Isaac, but Abraham had another son also, Ishmael. Because both of them came from Abraham and Abraham was justified by faith prior to the rite of circumcision, and

then Abraham and both sons were circumcised, then it must be that God is the Justifier of all people apart from the law.

The circumcision mandated in the law cannot be a source of boasting or one which makes a claim on God because it was actually instituted prior to the law and after Abraham's declaration of righteousness. And the declaration was made based on faith; simple belief in God's promises.

Life application: It can be deduced apart from the Bible that there is only one God. When we peer into the pages of the Bible, we need to continually remind ourselves that He is the God of all people. When it seems as though He treats different people differently, it is because we are misunderstanding what He is doing and why. In the end, all must come to Him in exactly the same way - by faith alone. Don't forget this fact and be reassured that God is completely fair in how He deals with all people.

**...since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.** Romans 3:30

Both Testaments wholly and completely establish the truth that "there is one God." This was noted in the previous verse and accepting the notion of the Trinity in no way implies polytheism. The Trinity is noted as "three persons in one essence," although the term "persons" is an unfortunate but necessary appellation. Time is three states in one essence - past, present, and future. All three exist equally and at the same time and yet they differ from each other. They are different reference points within the stream of time. This in no way implies "polychronism" or multitudes of time. It is one essential thing. Proclaiming a Trinity within the godhead is to affirm one God.

This God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - "will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith." God's means of justification doesn't change. The law cannot save and so faith in God and His provision, even under the law, is necessary in order to be saved. A person under the law, who lives the law scrupulously and yet doesn't have faith in what the law teaches is as far from God as the most vile sinner. And the vile sinner who understands his state under the law and yet has faith in the mercy of God is closer to God than the most obedient soul who lacks faith. Jesus showed us this in the following parable -

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:9-14

This train of thought is repeated throughout the Old Testament and throughout Jesus' teachings as He cited the law, reminding those around Him of this truth. The fact is that if a person could be justified through the observance of the law, then God would be the God only of those under the law. Everyone outside of the law would, by default, be excluded. But this isn't the case at all. In all times and in all ways, it is by faith that one stands justified before God. However, it must be proper faith. Misdirected faith is, after all, wasted faith.

So where does this leave "deeds." The question is valid because as the New Testament progresses, we will be faced with the concept of "bearing fruit" such as in Romans 7 and "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" as noted in James 2. The answer cannot be that deeds further justify us in our standing before God. If this were so, then a person who accepted Jesus and then got run

over by a train wouldn't be "as saved" as someone who got saved and then lived a long life helping others and doing good stuff.

The deeds after salvation - those done in faith for the sake of the gospel - must then accrue to our account, not for salvation but for rewards. This is an important point and it is the dividing line between heresy and truth concerning justification before God. It is by faith alone with nothing added that we stand justified before God. And the properly directed faith is in Jesus and His works. This will be explained in the following verse.

Life application: What is the motive for your deeds? If it is to attain salvation and a right standing with God, then you are far from Him. You have missed the grace of God as displayed in the work of Jesus for your salvation. Rather, trust in what Jesus has done - that it is all-sufficient to save you. And then, O saved soul, go forth doing good deeds out of a grateful heart in the salvation God has lavished upon you through His Son.