***Salvation Excludes Man's Boasting
RO33-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 3. We begin looking at three conclusions concerning justification as we come to a sort of a summary. We close out the third chapter summarizing from Romans 3:27-31 – what Paul has been teaching us in the high point of this letter on the principle of salvation as a provision of God apart from human works.

**Everybody is Condemned**

Paul's letter to the Christians in the city of Rome has established the fact that all humanity is under the condemnation of God. He has made that very clear. He has pointed out that this is true of immoral people; it is true of moral people; and, it is also true even of religious people. Outside of salvation through Jesus Christ, they're all under the moral condemnation of God, and their destiny, in the nature of the case, is eternity in hell.

The problem is that everyone born into the human race lacks the absolute righteousness that God requires for entrance into heaven – the absolute righteousness which is compatible with God's righteousness. Therefore, everyone is condemned. This problem is further compounded by the fact that nobody can do a thing about this. There is nothing that anyone can do to secure the absolute righteousness that he needs for eternal life. Therefore, Paul very happily announces that God has come up with a solution for this human dilemma in Romans 3:21-23.

**Absolute Righteousness**

There we are told that God has supplied and absolute righteousness to the sinner apart from his good works. This absolute righteousness is secured simply on the basis of trusting in Christ as Savior. This is a completely non-meritorious way of securing eternal life. So, the credit is all to God, which is the grace system; and, no credit to man, which is the legalistic system.

**Justification**

Paul then proceeds to explain why God can do this, and still remain absolutely righteous. How can God take a sinner into heaven, and Himself, in that very act, not be guilty of sin. In Romans 3:24-26 is the great theme (the great principle) that he's trying to teach in the book of Romans. This crediting of absolute righteousness to the believing sinner is called justification. This justification is offered without any demands for human merit or payment. It's a grace gift. Salvation is not dependent upon anything you do, or how you behave yourself, or don't behave yourself. Justification (salvation) is based on the redemption from the slavery to sin, which Jesus Christ provided by His death on the cross.

It is not who and what you are that makes any difference with God. It is who and what His Son is that makes all the difference with God. Most people have a very difficult time of catching hold of that. It is a natural inclination of the sinful human heart to look upon God, and to deal with God in terms of who and what we are, and thus to try to present something to God that's acceptable and pleasing to Him in ourselves, and we never can do it. But God is interested in who and what His Son is, and what you are willing to do in accepting what that Son has provided.

**Propitiation**

Propitiation is the justice of God against sin being satisfied. The payment made by Jesus Christ has propitiated God. This propitiation, we found, is based upon the shedding of the literal blood of Jesus Christ, and upon his literal, actual, physical death on the cross. It was not based at all on any human good works on our part. That does not satisfy God. And that's what propitiation means. It means to satisfy what God's justice demands.

The payment for the sins of the world by Jesus Christ has also vindicated the righteousness of God in granting eternal life before the cross. For years, God was taking people like Abraham and David and Jacob – people who were sometimes not all that hot morally. And he was telling them, "You're going to heaven. I declare you just." And it would seem that God was doing something that was not right in permitting those people to be justified.

Well, the death of Christ on the cross, first of all, was important to God to demonstrate that He was doing the right thing in permitting these people to enter heaven because he was going to pay eventually for their sins with what His Son was going to do.

So, now a holy God is free to declare a sinner justified who does no more, Paul says, than to rely on Jesus Christ for eternal life. Now, that is justification by faith; that is salvation; and, that is eternal life. And if you try to interject anything else in there; if you try to bring in some ritual; if you try to bring in some system of religious activity; or, if you try to bring in some ordinances such as water baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or anything else, you are acting in blasphemy against God. Paul makes it clear that heaven is available on the basis of what God has done through His Son. God is not interested in anything that you and I can come up with to try to help out.

**Three Conclusions**

Now, with that as the background, we come to Romans 3:27-31, which give a summary of three conclusions which Paul has drawn from this solution, which God has provided for the human sin problem. He wants to tie up what he has said with these three conclusions.

**Salvation Excludes Man's Boasting**

Conclusion no one is in Romans 3:27-28. It states that salvation excludes boasting on the part of man: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Law." Here is the principle stated in verse 27.

God has a perfect and a holy plan of salvation. It's entirely His own provision. At no point in this plan is anything dependent on human character or ability. Get that straight. At no point in the plan of justification is anything dependent on human character or human ability. At no point is human effort or any human merit included in justification. God is everything in this plan of salvation, and man is out of it entirely except as the recipient of what God has provided. Now, that's a grace operation from start to finish.

**Pride**

All human plans for salvation have an element that God will not tolerate – the element that caused Him to come down on Satan in condemnation. What was it that Satan came up with in heaven that brought the first sin into the universe? It was pride, and it led him into rebellion against God. Every human system of salvation follows that same mistake. Human pride is interjected. You may have pride in your morals. A lot of people think they're going to make it with God because they are moral people, and they *are* fine moral people. But without the absolute righteousness of God, which no moral person possesses, you're lost. That's a pride that's going to doom you to hell.

There's the pride of your good works. Some people are very kind. Some people see a stray cat walking down the street and he looks pretty skinny. So, they'll pick him up and take them home and feed him. That's wonderful. God says, "That's the kind of people I like in heaven – people who feed stray cats. They are very good, nice people. Some even feed human beings that are hungry. That's even better. That's not going to make it. That's your pride in your good works. We love to review for ourselves, and with other people, all the good things we do, and all the commendable things about ourselves that we perform. But God says, "That's pride, and I won't accept that for eternal life."

Perhaps it's your pride and your self-denial. Some people love to deny themselves, and they love to let you know about how they deny themselves so that they can provide something for others. They don't eat one day so that they can help the world hunger situation. They eat twice as much the next day, but at least it gives them a great satisfaction of pride that they have helped out in this way, and certainly God should be kindly disposed toward them.

There's the pride in your reason. This is a devastating thing. This is the contemptible person. This is the one who's above coming to church and learning doctrine because he just arrives at his conclusions in life by just thinking. He reads; he's informed; he talks to people who know; he's got a good IQ; and, he's going to make it that way. And God laughs at him, because God says, "My thoughts are as far above your thoughts as the heavens are above the earth. And you're a dummy, and you don't know it, and you think that the conclusions of your dummy mind somehow are going to gain some merit with Me."

Or you may have pride in your emotions: "I just love to praise the Lord. Every morning I get up and I just sing a praise to the Lord." And you walk around the house and let everybody know that you really love the Lord. You tell your friends how you love to praise the Lord. And the fact is that when you meet people, you always say that: "Praise the Lord." And you think that becoming emotional about religious things shows God that you merit His favor.

There is no pride such as the pride of religious devotion. The Pharisees are the great example of that. They were cruel, vicious, heartless people. Most religious people are just like that. They've got their fronts; they've got their rituals; they've got their performance; they go to the church; they sit through the misery of a church service; and, they say, "God, I performed my religion. I've got some credit and merit with you."

All of these are areas of pride in human achievement. They are the basis upon which most people expect to deal with a righteous and a holy and an absolutely perfect God. That is a great mistake.

That's behind what the apostle Paul is saying. He has just told us how God has thrown all that garbage out, and how God has rejected every human effort and everything that people can bring. God says that every human good comes from your old sin nature. Therefore, it is evil, no matter how fine and how useful it may even be as an act of human good at any particular point in time. But Paul says, "That gives you a basis of pride. It gives you a basis of credit. Therefore, God will not accept it. There is no boasting possible in connection with eternal life. God will not share His glory with anyone else. When you stand in heaven, the Bible says that you are going to be a trophy of God's grace. You're going to be in God's trophy case, and you're going to be to His credit and to His glory. You could just be sure that He's not going to say, "Well, here's Sam Jones. I did 99% of saving him, and he came up with 1%." I'm not even going to allow that little bit of tarnish on you as a trophy of His grace. So, don't count on it.

So verse 27 says, "Where then is boasting?" The word "where" in the Greek is the word "pou." It simply introduces a question. It introduces the question of the value of the system of human achieving: "Where is boasting?" Since the New Testament was written in Greek, we have to look to the Greek Bible to understand what it is we're reading in English. The English word "boasting" is the word "kauchesis." "Kauchesis" means glorying. That's what he's talking about: "Where is glorying? Where is the exercise of human pride?"

Let me show you something about the Greek language. When you get a noun (and this is a noun), and it's got an "s-i-s" ending like that, the "s-i-s" indicates that that's an active noun. That's an act. That's something doing. It's a little clue that you don't get from English, but it is very strong in the Greek. He's talking about an active glorying; of going around and bragging; of going around and expressing in one way or another your pride in yourself; your self-congratulation; or, your self-exaltation.

People are addicted to the idea of dealing with God on the basis of their own merits, and on the basis of their own *active* glorying. We call that "Operation Bootstraps." The world is always engulfed with the notion that somehow human beings can lift themselves out of the morass of their evil to something better. They try to delude themselves in one way or another that men aren't really bad; that the sin nature isn't really there; and, that somehow they can get better on their own effort if they really try.

So, you're told that when you wake up in the morning, the first thing you should do is look in the mirror and say to yourself, "In every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better." Do you do that? I can see the guilt on your face. You have been doing it, and you've been a failure because your active glorying is not going to pull you up into anything. So, don't count on that.

Some of you love to run around reading books are positive thinking. You think that by reading these kind of books, you're going to get yourself up there. Well, it is true, as we have already studied in previous series, that our subconscious is structured by God to be fed information so that it creates success goals that we go toward. Doctrine fed into the subconscious will indeed move us toward success goals. But you can also feed in the doctrine of demons. Don't forget that. Demons will take your subconscious, and they will move you toward successful goals.

What made Hitler such an amazement to people? Here was a poor, frustrated ex-artist. Here was a nobody. Here was a comparatively unattractive man, but who suddenly rose to power because he had fed into his subconscious certain concepts and certain goals. When he had to sit in prison for those few months after his aborted putsch, what did he do? He laid out concepts of superior race; concepts of hatred toward the Jews; and, concepts of antagonism toward the capitalist system, and so on. And he just programed himself for certain goals. And once he had the opportunity, he followed those goals right to their successful end.

So, his generals would say, "Her Fuhrer, we cannot make this kind of an attack on Poland." He would say, "Make the attack. It will be successful." They made the attack, and it was successful. They would say, "Her Fuhrer, we cannot make these demands on the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. It will not be tolerated by France and England." He said, "Make it," any he was successful. The time came when the generals kept their mouths shut because there was something about this man. They didn't realize it. Demonic direction is what it was that was taking his subconscious and directing him toward successful goals and achievements.

People believe that by their own bootstraps they can pick themselves up. While we can program ourselves, through the Word of God, to achieve a great deal, it is the Word of God that is achieving it. It is the power of God that is achieving it. You're not going to go anywhere in lifting yourself up apart from God.

**Boasting is Shut out**

So, here is a very basic principle. "Where is glorying? Where is bragging then? Where is boasting in all of this business of a human being getting into heaven?" Paul says, "It is excluded." And he uses this Greek word "ekkleio." Here's the answer to the question. This word comes from two Greek words. "Ek" is a preposition. It means "out." And "kleio" means "to shut." That's exactly what it means. It means "to shut out." It means that all human boasting with God – the door slammed on it, and it is shut up. It is not tolerated for one moment. With God, there is no value in what a lost sinner does for salvation. There is therefore no ground for pride. With God, there is absolutely no value in anything that a loss sinner does – no value whatsoever.

This is in the Greek aorist tense, which means human boasting, as a whole, is once and for all shut out. Aorist is a point action. And it is passive. That's interesting. It's passive because human boasting is not going to quit. It is God who has to come and slam the door on it until you get bruised hard enough, and you get sick of your boasting, and you get sick of the things that you're taking pride in. God says that it is excluded by Himself. Therefore, he says, "It is shut out." It's passive. It is indicating that God does it to us. It's indicative mood, which is a statement of fact.

**Total Depravity**

So, God strips every person of merit, and He places all on the same level before Himself. There is no superior class of sinners. If a sinner escapes eternity in hell, therefore, it is no credit whatsoever to himself. Since all sinners are on the same level, there's no comfort to be found in comparing yourselves to others. God puts everybody on the same plane. This condition of the sinner is due to the fact that he has been completely devastated by sin. We call that total depravity. If God allowed anybody to get to heaven by one bit of human merit, that person would be bragging about it in heaven. That's exactly what we would do. If God permitted us to help at all, we'd brag about it. We'd kind of drop it in conversation here and there. We'd let people know what we had done. And God says, "There's not going to be any bragging in heaven. I'm going to slam the door on that once and for all."

The reason people have this problem is because they fail to understand the natural separation that we have from God. Let me see if I can illustrate it this way. Imagine that there is a block called the land of eternal death, and a block called the land of eternal life. Between them is an impassable, bottomless canyon that cannot be crossed over by a human being no matter what. Everybody who is born into the human race is born in the land of eternal death, and he stands there, and he's looking out.

Now, in the land of eternal death, some people sink even below the level of normal, accepted human conduct and morality. They just become the perverts of society. They become the most absolute, vile, corrupt creatures that you can imagine. But no matter how low you sink in the land of death, that's still where you are.

On the other hand, some people rise to a very great height in the land of eternal death. They are very moral people. They make good money. They make a contribution of human good which the society appreciates. They're respected, and they're in a completely different situation than the person who's wallowing in the pig hole. Nevertheless, you'll see, that mountain-top person is still in the land of eternal death. You cannot approach God vertically. That's what people are always making the mistake of doing. That's what Paul is saying: "Now, look. I want to summarize this. I want you to understand that there's no room for boasting when it comes to eternal life. You cannot approach God by getting better than other people. You cannot approach God even by the fact that you started as a criminal down in the hole; and, that, by your efforts, you made yourself a respectable person that's up on the mountaintop. You're still in the land of eternal death. You haven't made any progress because you went vertically. God is not approached by vertical efforts of the human capacity found.

Some people (particularly these who think they have made some progress on their own) may actually look across to the land of the eternal living – the land of eternal life. And they see how people live there. They see the principles that they operate on – their principles of morality. And what they see over there, they imitate over here. That's another deception. You can bring the lifestyle of the land of life over here to the land of death, and you're still under God's condemnation. There is no ground for boasting. You're still in the land of eternal death.

The good religious leaders of Israel were in the land of death, and that's why they put Jesus Christ to death on the cross. The Pharisees viewed themselves as highly esteemed by God. They impressed the common people. But the fact of the matter was that they were under the condemnation of God.

**The Pharisee and the Publican**

One of the great examples we have is that story of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisees' remarks are characteristic of the attitude of the Pharisees, who lived in the land of death, in how they viewed themselves. Notice in Luke 18:11-12: "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are: extortioners; unjust; adulterers; or, even this tax collector. I fast twice in the week. And I give tithes of all I possess.'" This man obviously just reeked with pride and self-righteousness.

Yet, the Bible tells us that he was in the land of death. For you'll find at the end of that passage that we read in verse 14: "I tell you this man (that is, the publican, who recognized that he was in the land of eternal death, and called upon God for salvation) – I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." The respected man of the community stayed in the land of eternal death. But the man who wasn't respected, the tax collector, moved over to the land of the eternal living. The Pharisees were so good that they actually felt superior in conduct to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. That's how good they felt.

It Luke 15:2, we read, "And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" They watched Jesus Christ as He dealt with people who had spiritual needs, and contemptuously they said, "Look at that guy. He associates with sinners. He associates with the dregs of society." And they held him in contempt for that. They felt themselves superior. They were the good people. The Pharisees were proud of what? Well, they were proud of their legal righteousness. That's what this man said: "I fast twice a week. When it's time to fast, I fast. When it's time to tithe, I tithe. When it's time to go to the synagogue, I go to the synagogue. When it's time to offer a sacrifice, I offer the sacrifice. I perform the rituals."

He says, "The result is that I have a legal righteousness." But he presumed that that legal righteousness was the same as the absolute righteousness which was necessary for heaven, and it was not. He was still lost.

The Pharisees did like people do today – arrogantly setting up their own requirements as to what should satisfy the holiness of God. Then they feel that they passed. They set up their own requirements, and they give themselves a passing grade. And they actually held the common people (the ordinary people) in downright contempt because they felt so superior spiritually.

Notice John 7:45: "Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said unto them, 'Why have you not brought Him?'" They sent these guys out to get Jesus. They couldn't get Him" "The officers answered, 'Never a man spoke like this man.' Then the Pharisees answered them, 'Are you also deceived? (Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on Him?).' But this people who don't know the law are cursed." They looked upon the people who were responding to Jesus Christ, and they were calling them ignorant. They were so superior because they had a legal righteousness, and they had something to boast of, and they thought that they had made it with God. They did not realize that they still were in the land of eternal death.

In time, Jesus Christ made a statement to them. It happened to be in the Sermon on the Mount, which was the kiss of death for the Lord Jesus. Mind you that He's talking to a congregation about their preacher. Here's what he said in Matthew 5:20. Jesus said on that occasion, to the people before Him on that mount: "For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

This was a bombshell. All the people looked and said, "Well, we thought our elders and our scribes were the things we should imitate. We thought they were the epitome of what God favored. We thought they were the finest men in righteousness. And you're telling us that unless we have a righteousness that's better than our preachers, we're going straight into hell?" It was a shock to the people, and it infuriated the religious leaders, because the Pharisees had corrupted the Mosaic Law system into a religion that was alien to salvation by faith that Abraham knew. Abraham was saved on the basis of a salvation by faith. The Mosaic Law portrayed a salvation by faith in God, though it gave a ritual way of life with it. But the Pharisees had corrupted what they did in the Mosaic Law with those 613 rules, and they said, "This is how to get to heaven." They had reduced the requirements to where it was a travesty.

So, how do we solve this problem? All are born into the land of eternal death. Some are low, and some are high. Some are imitating those in the land of life. There is a chasm that we cannot cross. This is what Paul is making clear. God came into the picture, and He put a bridge across. God is the only bridge-builder. And that bridge was Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His death upon the cross, became the bridge that goes from the land of eternal death to the land of eternal life, and that is the only way a person gets across.

Now, while it is there, indeed, you do have to make the move, and you have to start going across. You have to walk from the land of eternal death to the land of eternal life. That's done by accepting the righteousness which comes by faith, and rejecting the righteousness which comes by human effort. You must reject legal righteousness for absolute faith righteousness. When a person receives Christ as Savior, he has walked across the bridge into the land of eternal life. Then, as the Scripture says, "He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." So, when you cross over, you cross over to absolute righteousness ("+R").

Do you remember the rich young ruler? He tried to cross this bridge, but he tried to cross it on his own merits. He tried to cross the bridge on something other than what the holiness of God says was an acceptable crossing.

Turn to Matthew 19 for just a moment. Let's look at this fellow. The rich young ruler is up here on the mountain peak in the land of eternal death, and he is very proud of the morality that he possesses. As you read through this story, you find that Jesus stressed that good can only be determined with God as the frame of reference. The rich young ruler here called Jesus "good." Jesus said, "Why do you call Me good?" Good has to be determined in terms of God. Only God is good. God is the frame of reference for good. And what Jesus was telling this man was that absolute righteousness is what is good. If you don't have that, you don't have good.

Now, this man wanted to know how to be saved. The Lord Jesus Christ told him that he would find eternal life by keeping the commandments. The Lord knew that he couldn't keep the commandments. He said, "Well, the commandments give you the righteousness of God. We say that God is good. God is absolute righteousness. Where do we find an expression of that righteousness? In the commandments of the Mosaic Law? Well, keep the commandments." He's referring to the moral code particularly – the Ten Commandments: "Keep those. That's good. That's where righteousness.

This rich young ruler (who was very rich) was so blinded with his own pride that he didn't realize that he was indeed not keeping the Ten Commandments, and that he indeed had failed. He did not recognize that he had an old sin nature, and that there was no way that he could keep those commandments. Instead, he said, "Oh, I've done all that." He was not trusting by faith in God to save him. He was in the land of eternal death, trusting in his morality to save him.

So, Jesus said, "I'll give you something to do such that, if you are a born-again person in the land of eternal life, you'd be able to do this. But if you are the last person in the land of eternal death, you'll not be able to do this." So, He told him to take his money and to give it away.

Verse 21: "Jesus said unto him, 'If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have." This included not only his money, but his material possessions: "Sell it; converted to cash; and, give to the poor. And you shall have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me." Here was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, telling a man who had money what to do with his money. This was something that was going to result in what? Treasures in heaven. I hope you have not forgotten that that's the name of the game.

God had prospered the rich young ruler financially. God said, "You can store treasures in heaven by using your money in a very definitive way." Why did you just say, "Give to the poor?" He told him to give to the poor because the poor were hungry; the poor didn't have clothes to wear; because the poor didn't have shelter; and, because the poor had needs that they were not capable of dealing with, and they were legitimate needs. Jesus was telling him, "Give now, young man, because now is when these people need it."

**Do it Now!**

I'm trying to impress upon you that when God moves us to do something, as He was telling this rich young ruler, like in terms of our money, He is not telling you to do something that's in the future. He's telling you to do it because it is the opportune moment, and the need is now.

How many times have the things of God and of the work of the Lord been held back because people have not acted upon what God has led them to do then? They delayed the response. The Bible tells us that this man could not respond. He sat up here in his peak of morality, but he couldn't say "Yes" to Jesus Christ. He could not follow the good advice to store treasures in heaven, and to follow the Lord Jesus in his life: "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." He could not part with them.

"Then Jesus said unto His disciples, 'Verily, I say unto you that a rich man shall, with difficulty, enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" This needle may have refer to little slip gates in the wall of Jerusalem after the main gates were closed. It was very difficult to squeeze a camel through that if a person came late after the gates were closed.

"When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus beheld them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.'" If this rich young ruler had been over in the land of the living, he would have been able to respond like that. He would have said, "Great man. I have a message from God. I have a direct leading of the Spirit of God for the investment of my money, and it's going to mean treasures in heaven. That's the kind of investment I like. That's a sure thing. Sometimes I'm appealed to for money. I'm moved by my emotions by some glib-tongued preacher. And I'm not sure that that's treasures in heaven then. But when God moves my heart as a result of the Word of God, that's solid information. That's a winning investment. That's one that I can't lose on.

1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Charge them that are rich in this age, that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to share, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come; that they may lay hold on eternal life."

The rich young ruler was an achiever. Therefore, he had to abandon all of the qualities that made him an achiever, in order to cross this bridge. He had to cast aside all of his dependence upon his pride in his keeping of the rules, and of the fact that he had been successful in life. You and I, as Christians, fail very often with our money, just like the rich young ruler did, because we do not follow through with what the Spirit of God is saying to us to do. I want to warn you that Satan encourages us in delays in functioning with our money.

It has not been so many years ago that one of the greatest industries we have in this church was begun in the form of the tape ministry. I'm still humbled by it every time I think of what God is doing; and, of the letters that people send us, and what they tell is happening to them in their relationship to God. We rejoice in the treasures in heaven that are being stored by these people as a result of their information from these tapes.

However, there was a time when we didn't have any equipment. There was a time when we made a 45-minute tape by copying 45 minutes on one side from one tape recorder to the other; and, then turning it over, and copying it the other way, just so we could send them to a few college students. Then the time came to get some machinery that could do the job. We saw that God had something here, but we needed those copy machines. And the copy machines cost $1,500. And as a result of mentioning the need, and as a result of presenting what God was doing, a person in this church (who is not in the position of having a great deal of money) said, "I've got $1,500 in a savings account, and the Lord has moved my heart to give that to buy those machines."

Now, we had people around who had a whole lot more money than that lady did to supply $1,500 for copy machines, but God didn't move them. But He did move her. What would have happened had she said, "I have it, but Lord, I better wait a while and sit on it? Let me see how things go, and see how things work out in a few months here." I'll tell you what would have happened. This ministry probably would not have existed, because the combination at that point was right. There was the personnel; there was the drive; there was the vision; there was the opportunity; there was the know-how; and, there was the spirit to do it. There was the clear leader of the Lord. And because she responded, the equipment was secured, and that ministry got rolling.

Now, I don't care where we ever go with the Berean tape ministry and the publications. It all began right there. That was the time we needed it. That was the time that it was to be given. But don't make the mistake of the rich young ruler. But here was an opportunity to store treasures in heaven. That lady stored treasures in heaven. Every tape that's cranked off those machines is racking up treasures for her. She can misbehave for the rest of her life, and she'll still be rich in heaven. I hope she doesn't, but she can. With every tape that goes out, for every person that's moved to divine viewpoint functioning, the computer is clicking in heaven with rewards to her account. It is Satan's way to encourage us to delay.

Many a military battle has been lost because too little came too late. At the beginning of World War II, we were not prepared for that war. The Japanese had to take the islands of the Philippians, and there, on the peninsula of Corregidor, on the island of Bataan, General MacArthur had put together the best that he could. But the best that he could resulted in a defense position that (under fantastic odds) they were able to hold for four months. But for four long months, our government was so obsessed with winning a war to save the British Empire that they poured our men and our matériel to Europe, and they did not give anything but a trickle to the Philippians. Had they poured what they gave to Europe into the Philippians, we'd have never lost it. And there'd be a lot of grave markers which would not be marking the deaths of American servicemen who had to retake the Philippians. But it was a story of too little too late. How sad for us to be guilty of that in God's work.

I encourage you that if the Lord is telling you to do something, do it. And it's not just your money. It's your life; it's your investment; it's your service; it's your ministry; and, it's the quality of what you do. Do not plan to get around to this in the future. Get yourself off of dead center, and realize that if your physical capacity goes, you're out of the operation. We are in a spiritual warfare, and some of us get shot down sometimes. And some of us manage to recoup. But this is a spiritual warfare, and it's going to be demanding in every respect upon us. But while you have the opportunity to engage in that combat, you better be smart and do it, because eternity in heaven is a long time. And your extent of enjoyment of it is going to be those treasures that you've sent up there.

Jesus said this again and again: "Do not store your treasures where rust decays and thieves come in and take it, so that you end up with nothing; but put it in heaven. Store it in heaven." The Lord may lead you to do something. He may lead you to delay doing that. He may lead you in the timing of doing that. But you be sure that you've got His timing.

The rich young ruler is a fine example of a man in the land of eternal death who could not cross over the bridge.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded."

**By What Law?**

Paul asks another question. Let's tie this up: "By what law?" This word "what" means: "by what sort of law?" This is the word "nomos" for "law." This is not law as the Mosaic Law, but this is principle: "By what principle is it excluded?" Paul uses the word "law" in this way (we're going to find in Romans 7:21, Romans 7:23, and Romans 8:2). He uses the word "law" as principle, not Mosaic Law. It's referring to human effort – that kind of law: "By what law? By what principle?"

Then he says, "Of works?" This is the Greek word "ergon." "Ergon" is human efforts. It refers to human activity apart from God the Holy Spirit. The question is: what excludes any ground for boasting in salvation?" Do works to it? And he gives us the answer: "Of works? No." And I want to show you what the word "no" is here in the Greek. It looks like this: "ouchi." The first part of the word (you perhaps remember) is the Greek negative for "no." It's "ou," and it's a strong no. It's not that other "no" ("me"), which is kind of a maybe, weak "no." This is a strong "no." And then when you add "chi" and get "ouchi," it is the absolute strongest expression of "no" in the Greek language. It really is: "No. Not at all. Absolute no."

So, his answer to the question is that human works do not exclude boasting. As a matter of fact, they give people an excuse for boasting in their achievements. So, how is most being excluded? How does God see to it that there is no boasting relative to salvation? There is no boasting relative to what a Christian accomplishes and achieves as a believer in his Christian service. It's not by works: "Absolutely no."

Then he says, "But." He uses this word "alla" for "but," in order to show a contrast to another word: "But there is a different way, and that is by a different principle: the law of 'pistis' – the law of faith, or the law of reliance on God." Now he says, "What you do as a result of trusting God, you're not going to boast about that. It's no credit to you. God has led you, and you agree. God has given you the gospel, and you believe it. That's faith. There's no credit to you. There is nothing to boast about. It is just receiving, receiving, receiving the blessings of God.

So, the principle of human works does not exclude boasting before God, but the principle of faith in Jesus Christ does. The principle of works depends on who and what the sinner is, and what he does. The principle of faith depends on who and what God is, and what He does. Works looks to self for eternal life, while faith looks to God. It is God alone who does the lifting of us out of sin.

Psalm 40:2-3: "He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He has put a new song in my mouth; even praise unto God. Many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord." Now, that's a great result of the faith method.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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