***We are Justified by Faith  
RO33-02***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 3 once more as we come to the close of this third chapter. This is a classic explanation of how God alone has made it possible for sinners to enter heaven without God violating His own holiness in the process. Romans 3:21-31 has summed up the legal basis for God's gift of absolute righteousness to believing sinners.

Now, when we move beyond this chapter, beginning with Romans 4, we're going to begin the historical aspect of our so-great salvation. But before Paul moves into the historical illustration and background, he wants to make it very clear what the legal basis was with God. Paul has stressed that whatever God does with human sin, it has to be compatible to His own character. He cannot violate who and what He is.

**Human Sin Posed a Problem for God**

Human sin actually posed a problem within God Himself, because, as you know, on the one hand, God is love. That is a marvelous, wonderful quality. Here is a God of love. God looks at you and me, the sinner. As His love looks upon us in our sin, what does His love want to do? His love wants to make it possible for us to come up to His heaven. Yet, God's love, on the other hand, is in tension with His own holiness. The holiness of God is resisting the expression of the love of God, because the holiness of God demands that the sinner be sent into hell.

There is the divine viewpoint picture concerning the nature of God and the human sin problem. God, Who is love, wants to take the sinner to heaven. God who is holiness must, by His own character, punish that sinner with eternity in hell.

So, whatever system of salvation is proposed, whether by man or by God, it has to be judged on the basis of the holiness of God. Remember that the holiness of God is made up of two factors. The holiness of God is made up of His absolute righteousness (His "+R"), and it is made up of His perfect justice. Absolute righteousness is required for living in heaven. Absolute justice demands that sin be paid for. That constitutes the holiness of God. Whatever salvation system a human being comes up with is going to be matched against the holiness of God. It's going to be judged against God's character.

So, the religions of mankind come along, and they recognize this tension within God between His love and His Holiness, and they resolve it by simply taking one side or the other, and ignoring the opposite. They'll come along, and they'll say, "Well, God is love. Therefore, as a God of love, He just wouldn't send a person to spend eternity forever in pain in hell. So, God is going to just forgive. He's going to forget the man sin. He's God. He can just set it aside." Or they go to the other side and they say, "Well, we're going to deal with the holiness of God." And the way we're going to solve the problem of the holiness of God is by man producing good works: "That's how we will resolve the fact that God is righteousness. We'll have man produce righteousness, and atone for his sin."

**Christianity is the Only Solution**

However, the Bible tells us that man cannot produce anything in the way of good works which is acceptable to God. The Bible makes it very clear that our righteousnesses (our human good) in God's sight are filthy, dirty rags (evil). So, there is nothing that a man can produce that can, in any way, atone for his sins. So, the religions in the world just have no solution for this. Either they say, "We'll call on God's love to forget sin," or they say, "We'll call on God's holiness to be met by man atoning with His good works." And God, who has to be true to His own character, has come up with a system called Christianity, which alone resolves this tension between divine love and divine righteousness. Only Christianity can solve this problem within God Himself. Christianity alone says that man's problem with sin is the result of his own choice. The religions of the world say: "Man's problem with sin is because that's how he was made. You can't hold him responsible for it. Therefore, God should just forget sin out of His love. He should just pass it over."

However, that is not true. Christianity says, "Oh, no. Sin is man's own fault. God did not create man a sinner. It is a man who chose by his own negative volition to become a rebel against God.

So, Christianity alone provides a way for a man to pay for his sins, and to meet the divine standard of justice and absolute righteousness. I stress this because you need to know this as you talk to people. You have to understand that people think in terms of the religions of the world. They know that God is a good person. He is a person of love. So, they are going to try to suggest to you (because this permeates American mentality) that He will ignore sin. Or they know that God is against sin; that He is for good; and, that He is righteous. Therefore, they suggest that He will accept man's good works, and ignore His own holiness.

However, Christianity says, "No. Man is responsible. God cannot ignore sin. God cannot ignore His own character. And He must come up with a system that is compatible with what he is.

So, Paul, here in Romans, clearly explains how, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sin, we can secure forgiveness and absolute righteousness as a free gift from God, while God, at the same time, maintains His Holiness. And only Christianity has a solution for this problem.

To say that God can accept a sinner into heaven apart from the cross of Jesus Christ is to change the character of God. And that cannot be. And that's what the average person tries to do. He just tries to change God into something that he thinks is more acceptable.

Now, Christianity alone is the answer. Christianity is the only way to salvation. Because Christianity has a different diagnosis from the religions of the world about the sin problem, it comes up with a radically different solution. But the cross of Jesus Christ, which is the solution that Christianity comes up with, is meaningful only if you abandon that human viewpoint analysis. If you keep hanging on to that idea that you're not responsible for your sin; if you keep hanging onto the idea that God (because He is love) just wants to act in mercy (He's not going to send a person to hell); and, if you keep hanging on to the idea that God (while He is righteous) will accept your best efforts and your human righteousness, then the cross of Jesus Christ will be meaningless to you. It'll be of no profit. And it is that thinking that permeates the American mentality, and that's why it is so difficult to reach people with the realization of God's plan of salvation, and an acceptance of it.

The cross of Jesus Christ gives the solution for the sins of the world, which no religion and no philosophy of the world can ever give, because it resolves the conflict between the desire of God's love to be merciful and the demand of God's justice to be met with the punishment upon sin.

Human viewpoint always runs around saying, "How can a God of love send anyone to the suffering of hell forever?" But the real question is: "How can a God of absolute righteousness accept people into His heaven who fall below His absolute standards?" That's the real question. Divine viewpoint asks: "How can a holy God send people to heaven?" That's what is the real issue. The answer is that with man as himself (sinner as he is), God can't do it. God has to come up with a solution, and in Christ, He has it.

Now, the sinner may refuse to admit that Christianity can remove the real separation between God and man, but that won't make any difference. He'll still suffer the pain of separation. He may refuse to admit that only Christianity can remove man's separation, but he'll still be separated. He has to reject the human viewpoint analysis that evil is inherent in man's make up, rather than that man is in rebellion. He has to reject the human viewpoint solution that a holy God will ignore His own standards, and that He will accept some substitute of human works for absolute righteousness.

Those of you who receive the "Christian Anti-Communism Crusade" newsletter perhaps have been reading with fascination (as I have been) a series of articles by a young man named Marvin Olasky, a PhD graduate of Yale University. He began as a Jew, reared in Judaism, and he went to Yale (with all those noble American ideals and concepts beating in his heart, and a sense of patriotism; pride of country; respect for the free enterprise system; and, so on). Then he sat under Marxist professors (which permeate the universities of this country). And gradually, all that was beaten down till he was driven into atheism. The inner circles of the communists in this country smile at all of the talk against McCarthyism because the communists knew that McCarthy was right, and that our government has indeed been shot-through with communist influences.

Marvin Olasky knew it because that was the program they outlined for him. They told him the plan that they had for him: how he would go forward as a writer and a commentator, working for newspaper companies; and, how he would gradually rise to a position of power and of influence in those organizations, and then begin slanting toward the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint all of these publications. This was done again and again. He was just one of hundreds of people who were in the highest echelons of the government. The communists used to smile over our liberals badmouthing the fact that Joseph McCarthy came up and said, "Where we are today is the result of people like Alger Hiss and the other people who stood at the right hand of Truman at Yalta, and of the influences upon president since; and, that the liberal press simply doesn't know what it's talking about."

Here's a man who was on the inside. Well, wonder of wonders, God (in His grace) led him to Jesus Christ, and he was born again. And one of the interesting things about his experience, as he looks back on it, is to recognize the separation from God (that was a great pain to him) as he tried to be a clean-cut atheist. I want to read to you a little bit of an extended article (this last one in the last newsletter) that I think is just excellent, and presents this problem that Paul is talking about here in Romans of man's separation from God. It's the September 1st, 1977 issue. The title of the article is "Communism: The Opiate of the Atheist."

**Karl Marx**

"The appeal of communism can only be understood when we realize the reality of the pain caused by man's separation from God, and the need to find something to alleviate the pain. The life of Karl Marx himself is a testimony to man's need for a painkiller of some kind – an opiate, once he has turned away from God. Marx professed to be a Christian when he was young. (Did you realize that?) He wrote in an essay entitled 'The Union of the Faithful With Christ' that: 'Union with Christ imparts an inner exaltation; comfort in suffering; calm trust; and, a heart full of love from humankind – open to everything noble, everything great; not out of ambition, but for Christ's sake.'

"(This was) Karl Marx in his book on religion. He understood that the way to true liberty is through Christ. Something happened to Marx while he was a university student, and it caused a great change. It seems that his family and church life lacked conviction. It seems that he was influenced by atheistic professors. It seems that his own intellectual pride got the better of him. Whatever the reason, Marx lost that inner certainty – that desire for union with Christ. He lost it, but he still needed it. He had known answers to the basic questions of human life: Who am I? Where am I going? What is the meaning of history? What is the secret of human personality? But he no longer had those answers. How terrible it must have been for young Karl Marx to feel so terribly alone.

"We read these days about the sad plight of refugees – men without countries. How much more tragic is the situation of refugees from religion – men without Christ? Marks, the refugee, lost without God, decided to turn his genius against religion. (He) decided to scorn those who still had the faith he had lost. He began to argue that religion is an illusion, a form of the self-awareness and self-regard of man who has either not yet found, or has already lost himself.

"In his hatred of the God he had denied, he came to call religion 'the sigh of the distressed creature, the opiate of the masses.' He argued that man had invented God as a pain-killing drug.

"All of us who are Christians know that Jesus Christ really does exist – that He is not a figment of our imagination, or a mere pain-killing device. We know that Jesus Christ is not an opiate, but a complete cure. Yet, there is an insight in Marx's analysis of the need for opiates that we should not overlook: namely his awareness that man is in pain.

"Let us contemplate for a moment the man who has either not yet found, or has already lost himself – the man who is in pain, but who accepts the attacks on Christianity, and refuses to accept the cure which God offers him. Doesn't that person remain in pain? He is human. He bleeds. He sighs. He needs help. But there is no one to save him. Without God, he feels himself alone in the universe, without an ultimate purpose for living. And if that person needs a purpose for living (and any sensitive nonbeliever does), what does he do?

"Marx faced that problem of pain when he left God, but he did not commit suicide as some desperate nihilists do. He did not just lie on the beach all day and burn his brains to a crisp. He did not spend his time in hedonistic pursuits, drowning his sorrow in liquor and lust. No, Marx was a bigoted man, but he was also a great thinker. He solved the problem of giving meaning to the lives of atheists better than anyone had solved it before or has solved it since. He spent his life developing a religion for atheists – a religion which proposed a specific program for the regeneration of man; a specific priesthood; a set of sacred scriptures to control the regeneration process; a specific meaning for history; and, (a) purpose for life. He developed an atheistic religion capable of providing relief from the pains of meaninglessness which permeate atheistic life. He developed a belief for those who scorn belief – a reason to live for those who would otherwise be in despair. He developed the religion of communism.

**Communism**

"Communism fits Marx's own definition of religion. It is a form of the self-awareness and self-regard of man, who has either not yet found or has already lost, not just himself, but most importantly, God. It is the sigh of the distressed creature. It gives atheists all over the world a way to kill their pain. In short, communism is the opiate of the atheists. Communists have been successful in killing their pain for a time by believing in their false religion. Yet, communists eventually find that they cannot escape the truth of the epistle which Paul wrote to the Romans nearly 2,000 years ago: 'Although they claim to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal men and birds and reptiles.'

"As Paul knew so well, atheistic man's search for an opiate leads him to the crassest sort of idolatry, as we can judge from the horrible hymns of praise from the Chairman Mao in recent years; or, from this typical Pravda poem of the 1930: 'O, great Stalin. O, leader of the peoples; thou who broughtest man to birth; thou who purifiest the earth; thou who restorest the centuries; thou who makest bloom the spring; thou splendor of my spring; o, thou sun reflected of millions of heart.' From Communism and Christ by Charles W. Lowry, page 51.

"How sickening; how sad; but how completely understandable in its idolatry. How inevitable the hateful actions of communism which spring from worshiping the creature rather than the Creator. As Paul wrote in Romans, 'Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to what ought not to be done. They had become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice.

"Communism is not the only opiate that exists. Many are constantly offered to Christians in the form of self-fulfillment and worldly success. The true Christian life needs no opiate."

On the background of Marvin Olasky's experience, I think that's an excellent presentation of the problem that Paul is trying to convey here in this chapter – that man without God is in pain, and if he rejects the only solution (which is Christianity), he continues in pain, and then comes up with a solution of his own to relieve the pain (like communism, or the religions of the world), only to discover in time that it does not satisfy. And when he faces God, God will judge him on the basis of God's own standards. And man, with his solution, will never reach that standard. He fails every time.

Paul has been trying to make this clear so that we understand where we are with God, and so that we can understand the rest of this dissertation of Romans. Paul close chapter 3 with a summary of three conclusions based on God's plan of justification; that is, imputing absolute righteousness to a sinner. These are logical conclusions. They are based on God's provision for human salvation. If you don't understand these, then you will miss how God saves a person. The human viewpoint systems of salvation all violate these logical conclusions.

**Salvation Does not Include Man's Boasting**

The first conclusion we began looking at last week, and that is that God's way of salvation leaves no room whatever for human pride to boast of its part in salvation. Romans 3:27 declares that to us: "Where is boasting then?" His answer is: "It is excluded." And what he's asking is: where is there any basis for being proud of yourself relative to what you have done relative to salvation? And the answer is no place. There is no place for boasting. This fact is not due to the principle of salvation by one's own works. If salvation were by one's own works, then you would have something to boast of. However, he says that it is due to the fact: "By the principle of faith." Because it is simply believing and trusting in what God has provided, there is no place for boasting.

This business of boasting is critical, not only in salvation, but to you and me as Christians. We are constantly prone to think that our accomplishments in the Lord's work are something that we can take satisfaction in on our part. That's what Paul says: "Hey, there is no boasting. There is no boasting at all." He knew from doctrine and from experience that one of the first principles a Christian has to learn is that in dealing with God, there is no room for boasting. It is the Gideon experience all the way down the line, where God strips you down to where (if you've got half a brain) you say, "Well, what I accomplished in this battle, as Gideon accomplished in his, must be as the result of what God is doing, and I am privileged to cooperate as His instrument, but it certainly cannot be any credit to me, because it can't be anything that I have done, any more than it was anything that Gideon and his 300 men did. It was what God did as the result of their being compatible with the directions of God. That was grace that brought the victory.

You and I are in the angelic conflict – the angels of evil against the angels of God, and we're caught in the middle. And the victories that we enjoy give us no room for boasting because they are purely the grace of God.

Now, Paul understood that. He understood this no-boasting principle. We looked at the Greek word for "boasting," but there are several other words. They're all related to that word. All these, if you total them up in the New Testament, you'll find that 64 times in the New Testament, the words for "boasting" and those related to "boasting" are used. Guess who uses most of them (58 of them). 58 of those times are used by the apostle Paul alone. This man stressed that works and grace were mutually exclusive.

Romans 11:6 exemplifies this when he says, "And if by grace (that is, faith), then it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace. Otherwise work is no more work." What Paul is saying is that salvation cannot be some of grace and some of works. They're mutually exclusive. And neither can Christian service be some of your good efforts, and some of what God enables you to do as a result of your good efforts. It's the old principle of saying, "Lord, please bless what I have put together. Please bless what I have created, because I've done it for Your glory."

Paul recognized that, though his volition wanted to serve Jesus Christ, and though his spiritual achievements (he could see) were there, it was because of what God was doing. It was obvious that great movements were set in motion; churches were founded; and, Scripture was produced. It was obvious that Paul was progressing spiritually. He moved toward building a spiritual maturity structure in his soul. He could see what was happening within himself, and outside. Yet, he recognized that all of these accomplishments were the result of something that God was doing, and he had no ground for boasting in it whatsoever.

So, in 1 Corinthians 15:10, the apostle Paul says, "But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain. But I labored more abundantly than they all; yet, not I; but the grace of God, which was with me." We're not saying, "Lean back, and don't throw your best capacities into the Lord's service." We're not saying, "Don't sit down and meditate; think about the problems; look for the solutions; discuss these things with the Lord; and, put your spiritual abilities into operation." We're not saying that, because Paul said, "I labored more abundantly than all my peers and all my contemporaries." But at the same time, he said, "I want you to know that while I really worked hard, and while I really suffered for the Lord, I have never for one moment supposed that what I was accomplishing was a credit to me. I knew it was the grace of God that was functioning." And great things were done, but Paul had nothing of which to boast.

So, the words for boasting were used again and again (mostly by the apostle Paul) in the New Testament to warn us against using God's grace achievements through us to build up self-glorification. That is because the minute you do, you're out. That's the problem: recognizing achievements without thereby undoing what God has done through you because you use God's grace achievements for self-glorification.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:31 that the only legitimate boasting is: "That according as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 10:17-18 is another expression. Paul says, "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends."

Galatians 6:14 is another expression of Paul's attitude of legitimate glory: "But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Now, that is the principle – that I glory in what? Well, in the fact that, on the cross, Jesus Christ accomplished something that turned loose the grace of God in my life. He is saying, "Now, I can tell you what God has done. I can tell you what I have experienced. But what I am, I am by the grace of God. I do not fall into the trap of self-exaltation."

Now, that is the principle that is behind Romans 3:27 when he says, "Where is boasting? It's excluded because God does not deal on the basis of human works, but on the basis of faith, which is the grace basis."

**We are Justified by Faith**

The conclusion in Romans 3:28 says, "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Law. The Greek word for "conclude" refers to thinking something through. It is the Greek word "logizomai." "Logizomai" means something that you have thought through on the basis of God's information, and now you reach a conclusion. What's the conclusion? "Therefore, we conclude that a man." And the word "man" is that Greek word "anthropos." That's important because this is the generic word. That means "humanity." That means that a human being is justified. There's our word that we've had so many times. It's the Greek word "dikaioo." This means to be declared righteous. In the Greek, it's in the present tense, which means that it is constantly true: "We conclude, therefore, that a man is constantly justified." It's passive voice, which means that he doesn't do it to himself, but God does it for him. It's infinitive mood. That's important here because that indicates to us that it's God's purpose. It is God's purpose to justify a person on what basis? By faith.

Therefore, we conclude that a human being is declared absolute righteousness on the basis of the principle of faith – by means of faith. Therefore, there is no ground for boasting. Boasting is a declaration of personal merit. It is the principle of faith. Then he makes it even more emphatic by adding the Greek word "choris," which means "absolutely separated;" and, I mean absolutely separated from any human works. He says, "From any the deeds of the Law." Here, he's referring to the Mosaic Law. This is any of those rituals; any ceremonies; or, any actions – none of those things causes a person to be saved.

You and I are constantly plagued by trying to approach God on some basis of works. This can be verbal works, for example – your expressions of your words. You think that you have something to boast of with God because of your expressions of repentance; because of your confession of sins; or, because of your asking God to save you. This can be the formula such as: "God be merciful to me, a sinner," which now that you understand propitiation, you recognize as an insult to God to ever say that to Him. "For merciful" means to be propitiated, and He already is. These verbal works are very much depended on for some people to gain merit with God.

They may be your promises that you'll never do that particular sin again as a Christian. How many times have you thought that you could gain God's favor with your verbal promises? Or you have your ritual works. You're trusting to make it with God by your circumcision; your water baptism; the candles you burn; or, the prayers you recite. Or they may be your psychological works. They may be your public moves to seal things with God.

That really kills me when I hear evangelists say, "Now, if you have sat there and you have heard this gospel, and you understand that Jesus Christ has died for your sins, and you understand that God is ready to give you absolute righteousness, now come forward and seal this with God." This is like you had to say, "You know, I do believe that. I accept Christ. I accept what He's done. I believe God's telling me the truth. His son has made provision for my sin. Now I'm going to go forward so I can put a stamp (a seal of approval) on that. That's just a psychological gimmick so that the evangelist, who has been called in (the revivalist), will show that he's been successful, so that he'll get invited again.

Or it may be your corporate works. Join a local church organization that's hot and going. And join its program/ Get into its program. How many of you have a problem in life, and you think you're going to solve it by getting into some kind of a program of some local service, and that God is going to bless you then.

Or it may be your religious works? That's what Paul has in mind here – the keeping of the Mosaic Law and other good works.

Or it may be your behavior improvement. You're going to stop your immoral ways. You're going to give up your bad habits, and God is going to be kind to you because of that.

Or it may be your emotional works – your ecstatics. You're like the charismatic like to say: "Learn how to praise God," which means how to have an emotional orgy in public, and how to have no content in your approach to God on the basis of His word. You think that by emotional expressions, you're going to establish some work such that God will say, "I'm really pleased with you, and I'm going to bless you."

**Self-Deception**

All of this is self-deception. Salvation is apart from what you and I do. The accomplishments of our Christian service, while done through us, is the result of the grace of God working in us, and is no credit to us. Don't ever forget Ephesians 2:8-10: "By grace you are saved through faith; and that faith not of yourself. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." That is the principle, and we can't violated.

That's the first conclusion. Paul said, "And I hope you understand, after all I have said of how God sees a human being, and how God takes him from the pit of sin into the elite experience of heaven, that it is a process that leaves no room for human boasting.

**Salvation is the Same for All**

The second principle is in Romans 3:29-30, which is that salvation is the same for all: "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the gentiles? Yes, of the gentiles also." He's not only alone the God of the Jews, but He is also the God of the gentiles. In other words, there is only one God: "Is He the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of gentiles?" The word "not" there is the Greek word "ouchi." That's the strongest negative in the Greek language. And one of the nice things about Greek is that when it asks a question, it tells you what the answer should be. And when it uses this particular "ou," that means the answer to that question is "yes:" "Is He not the God of the gentiles also?" And right there in the Greek, they already put the answer: "Yes, He is the God of the Greek." "Ouchi" tells us that.

However, in order to make it very clear, the apostle Paul uses the Greek word for "yes." He adds even another word and says, "Yes. Of the gentiles also." Thus, in a very emphatic way, he makes it clear that there is one God. He is the God of the Jew. He is the God of the gentiles. There is one deity. There's one God in the universe known through Scripture.

Romans 3:30 then says, "See." Or the Greek word is really "eiper," and it really means "if indeed." That's really a little better translation here. It's "If indeed God is one, and He is. Yes. Of the gentiles also. If indeed God is one who will justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith." There's our word "justify" again. He will declare absolute righteousness. This time it is in the future. At any point that a person trusts in Christ as Savior, whether he is of the circumcision (that is, the person who is from the Jewish group – that's what circumcision means: the cut-around group); or, if he is of the gentile group – the uncircumcision; that is, the people who are non-Jews, who are not descended from Abraham. This is true of members of either one of these groups. He is going to save them through faith. There are not many gods. There's only the God revealed in Scripture. Both the Jews and the gentiles are saved by this one God.

Therefore, Paul's point is that Jew and gentile are saved the same way. We saw earlier in the book of Romans that he's had trouble: "You Jews who think that by keeping your Mosaic code you're going to be saved are wrong, because the Mosaic Law never was given to a gentile. The gentiles were never brought under the Mosaic Law. Therefore, the gentiles could never have been saved. Yet, we know that the Old Testament promises salvation to the gentiles, and that gentiles were saved. There's that beautiful Ruth in the Old Testament that came from Moab. She was a gentile. Eventually, she came into the line of the descendants of Jesus Christ. And she made that very dramatic, beautiful statement: "Thy God shall be my God; your people, my people;" and so on. And she was saved (born-again).

How could that be? She wasn't even under the Mosaic Law. Well, obviously, Paul's point is that there is one God; there's one way of salvation; and, that way is through faith. And though you are Jew, you should have been circumcised. You had to be. That was the right thing to do as a Jew. If you were a gentile, you didn't have to be circumcised. But you had to both be saved by faith. Whatever your religious rituals were, were apart from that issue.

It is true that the Jews had a special relationship to God, but salvation extended to the gentiles in all ages just as well. So, justification has always been by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. That was God's provision in paying for sins.

Gentiles through history have found the Jewish nation the channel to the living God and to eternal life. But they did not find the Mosaic Law system the channel to eternal life. The one that God justifies, whether he's Jew or gentile, He justifies apart from the Law.

You may want to pursue this a little further in Paul's speech in Acts 17:22-30 to the men of Athens. There you will find that all of humanity is divided into a relationship to God, where men are, first of all, the creatures of God. He says, "Everybody has been created by God (Acts 17:22-27). Some people equate the fact that: "God has made me. I'm a creature of God, so I have eternal life. I have a divine spark." But please don't forget that apes and baboons are also creatures of God, and they do not have a divine spark in them. They are not saved just because God made them. So, just because God made you, and you are a creature of God, does not mean that you're going to heaven.

Paul then points out also that we are offspring of God. That's another category of human beings (Acts 17:28-29). By being offspring of God, we not only were made by God as physical creatures, but we are His offspring in terms of the fact that Genesis 1:26-27 tells us that we're made in the image and likeness of God. In this way, we're different from the animals. Animals are not in the image of God. But being God's offspring does not mean you're saved.

The third category that you can read about in Acts 17:30-31 is what we would call a child of God. Jesus promised freedom from Satan and from sin to those who trusted him, in John 8:31-32, because they thereby became children of God.

The Jews resented the Lord suggestion that they were not free, and that they were not children of God. In John 8:33, they very have a very violent reaction when Jesus suggested that they were not children of God, and thus they were not free. Jesus pointed out to them that they had a father alright, but their father was Satan (John 8 42-43).

So, that is the point that Paul is making. Whether you are a Jew or a gentile, there's only one God that you deal with.

**Salvation Establishes the Mosaic Law**

Furthermore, the third point (the third conclusion) is that salvation establishes the Mosaic Law. Romans 3:31 says, "Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the Law." The question is: "Do we make void?" This is an interesting Greek word: "katargeo." It means "to nullify;" "to abolish;" or, "to make meaningless:" "Do we then make meaningless?" Do we abolish the Mosaic Law?" And remember that the only way you understand the Word of God is by knowing the meaning of words.

Words have not only definition meanings, but words also have emotional implications. If I say "Stars and Stripes forever," that has a definition of how a flag is made, and what those stripes stand for (of the original 13 colonies) but just the expression "Stars and Stripes forever," apart from definition, has an emotional connotation to you of patriotism and pride of country. Many a Christian is in trouble in his spiritual life because he sits in church and he does not have words defined for him. Instead, he gets emotional qualities from words, and then when he meets the crises of life, the emotions won't carry him. But if he knew the content of words, then he'd know doctrine. Then he'd be carried.

The apostle Paul says, "Wait a minute. Some people are going to accuse me of nullifying the Mosaic Law because of this principle of faith: "Do we then nullify the Mosaic Law system and dismiss it through faith?" Paul was often accused of doing this because of his doctrine of salvation by grace apart from works. Acts 21:28 is an example of that. Just because Jew and gentile are saved apart from the Law, does that mean that we are rejecting the Law which ruled for 14 centuries? The answer he gives is "no:" "God forbid."

This is an idiom in Greek, literally what the words say is, "Let it not be." It is Paul's strong repudiation of such an idea. Justification by faith alone apart from human works in no way nullifies the standard of moral righteousness which was demanded by the Law. The Mosaic Law revealed the absolute righteousness of God. It was the basis upon which God was going to deal with human beings. That's what we've been trying to establish. The Mosaic Law revealed the sinfulness of man – that man cannot keep God's standards. And the Mosaic Law doomed man from any hope of meeting that standard and coming up with anything out of his old sin nature. Therefore, the Mosaic Law was a mirror that showed us just how dirty we are. But the mirror doesn't clean you.

So, Paul is saying, "No. We do not nullify the Law." He says, "What we do is actually, by salvation through faith, 'histano.'" And this is an important word. We establish, and that's what it means. "We confirm" would be a good translation. We confirm the Law. Well, how do you confirm the Law? How do you establish the Law? By paying for sin, because that's what the crack of the whip of the Law said: "If you sin, you must pay." And that was the principle of the Law.

So, how do you establish the Mosaic Law? Well, you establish it by executing judgment upon the sinner. A man went out and picked up sticks on the Sabbath day. How did they establish the Law? How did they confirm the Law? He broke the Law. They executed him for picking up those sticks to make a fire on the Sabbath day. The penalty was executed on Jesus Christ on the cross. In that way, we who are saved through faith, Jew or gentile, have established, Paul says the Mosaic Law. We don't dismiss it. We don't degrade it. We don't repudiate it. It is only we who are saved by faith that really establish the Mosaic Law.

So, let's ask ourselves a couple of questions. Are you still agonizing over your sinful failures? If God has said to us that His gift of absolute righteousness is apart from your works, what are you agonizing over? God says, "I don't care what you are. I'm going to give you absolute righteousness on the basis of what you think of My Son, and how you are related to Him. If you are agonizing, you still have pride over who and what you are." You're still trying to follow principle number one that he said cannot be: boasting.

So, forget your pride as a means of trying to secure God's favor. You are a failure, but God is not dealing with you on the basis of who and what you are. He's dealing with you on the basis of who and what His Son is. Your concern should be to learn Bible doctrine, and permit the Holy Spirit to build a maturity structure in your soul, and take you on to super grace living.

I have justification from God as a sinner, not as a saint. I function in my spiritual life as a potential failure, not as a sinless believer. When God declares us justified, He does indeed give us the capacity to live right. That should be our goal, and that should be the thing we pursue. If we take doctrine into the soul, and permit the Spirit of God's power to lead us, you are going to do exactly that. You're going to fulfill the standard of the Mosaic Law.

However, forget the fact that you are a failure. Forget the fact that you have fallen short. Make confession; pick yourself up; and, move on, because it is through the very failures that we are exercised in our divine nature to develop a life which conforms to God's pattern of righteousness which will free us to be showered with His blessing. There is no boasting. There is one God to deal with, and He establishes the absolute righteousness as expressed in the Mosaic Law.

Those conclusions will bear majestic fruit in your life, both now and in eternity.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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