

SOUND DOCTRINE FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS – Studies in Romans

Where Then is Boasting? (Romans 3:27-31)

“Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW” (emphasis added)

The apostle Paul follows up the heavy theology of Romans 3:21-26, with some common-sense practicality in vv27-31, for the purpose of penetrating any prideful Jewish opposition. He does so by posing five questions which he fully expects his fellow Hebrew readership to ask. Since their self-righteousness and its resulting spiritual pride was at the heart of their opposition, Paul begins by confronting the matter of braggadocio. Any possibility of boasting is completely removed from the mouth of anyone who is justified on the basis of faith and not works (v27).

Furthermore, seeking to be justified before God on the basis of the works of the Law cannot be a basis for boasting, since any such attempt is doomed to failure. A successful justification before God can only be attained through faith in Christ and His redemptive work; which in turn eliminates any reason for personal pride in that achievement. The achievement is Christ's alone! But the attainment of His accomplishment can be ours by receiving it as God's gracious gift, on the basis of faith alone, in Christ alone (v28).

Paul adds further clarification to erroneous Jewish thinking in vv29-30. Simply put, his fellow Hebrews not only needed to accept justification by faith as the sole means of salvation, but were also in need of abandoning the notion that God's forgiveness was available exclusively to them. It is not; a truth which serves as yet another slap in the face to Jewish pride. Paul does this by appealing to Deuteronomy 6:4, with a logic that is grounded in common sense. If there is only one true God, then He is the Creator of the Jewish race, as well as all the other Gentile races. So why wouldn't God accomplish a redemption, by providing a Redeemer, for everyone who is willing to come to Him in faith, regardless of their racial or religious background? Paul's reasoning here also provides us with further Scriptural proof that God is not a racist. Or, as the apostle Peter states in Acts 10:34-35, *“... I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.”*

In concluding chapter three, Paul confronts one other likely misunderstanding from within his Jewish readership, by saying this in v31 –

“Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Paul reveals to all of us, but especially his fellow Jews still living under the Mosaic Covenant, that there is no incompatibility between the Law of God and His plan of salvation. How justification by faith could actually “establish” the Law would have no doubt piqued Jewish curiosity. But the apostle makes both his Jewish and Gentile readers in Rome, and all of us, wait until later in this letter before providing an answer.