

THE MOST IMPORTANT PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE

Discover God's Grace Study Series

Study #5 - Read Romans 3:23-30

Last time, we saw that the cross demonstrates God's perfect and ultimate justice. Since justice has already been *fully served* on the cross, God now pardons sin and promises to impute (credit) Christ's own righteousness to anyone who simply believes in Him. This means that if you have put your trust in Jesus alone, God the Father now sees you as being without sin, without guilt and without blame. He now identifies you as being "in Christ", so you have (and are free to enjoy) His full acceptance and approval forever!

Write your first name on the blank lines below and then recite it back to yourself.

Note: This short poem (author unknown) is worth memorizing and reciting often.

"Dearer, dearer, dearer _____ could not be, for in the person of His Son I am as dear as He. Nearer, nearer, nearer _____ could not be, for in the person of His Son I am as dear as He. Thank you Father for what you have done for me!"

H. It's All About Who Gets The Glory (Romans 3:27-28)

Here is an expanded paraphrase of Romans 3:27-28...

'Then what becomes of our boasting? It is completely eliminated, because, [in light of the fact that Christ did it all] there is absolutely nothing left for us to boast about or take credit for! On what principle is our boasting eliminated? Is it on a principle of our own good works or obedience to God's commands? No! Our boasting is eliminated on an entirely different principle altogether, the principle of faith! For I (Paul) hold to what I have been telling you all along, a person is justified before God only through faith in Jesus Christ, totally apart from works and obeying God's commandments.'

Note: The word "boasting" refers to *taking the credit or honor for something and/or bragging about, glorying in or praising* someone. The concept of *man's glory* versus *God's glory* is a major theme throughout the Bible, the emphasis always being on the fact that God alone is worthy of glory, honor and praise. He is the one to be *boasted* about (see Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Previously (in verses 19-26), Paul has been emphasizing that our salvation comes to us only through faith (childlike trust) in Jesus and what He accomplished for us on the cross. Paul made it clear that we are justified "freely" by God's grace (by His unmerited, unearned and undeserved kindness and generosity). This means that we are not made right with God because we obey, or *try* to obey, the 10 commandments. We are not saved by doing good deeds or by being kind to other people. We are not forgiven by making a commitment or promise to God or because of our personal surrender or dedication to Christ. Paul's point in verse 27 is that if we could do anything that contributed to our justification, even to the slightest degree, we would deserve at least some of the credit. In chapter 4, speaking about Abraham, he makes this same point.

(Romans 4:2-4) **"For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'. Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. [But] to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness."** (NIV)

NLT = New Living Translation, NIV = New International Version, ESV = English Standard Version

Feel free to copy and distribute this content, provided no changes are made and all copyright information is retained.

Content may not be sold. Written by Rob Armstrong ©2016. For more free study materials, visit DiscoverGodsGrace.org

THE MOST IMPORTANT PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE

Discover God's Grace Study Series

Paul is using straightforward logic. He's saying that if works or dedication have any part in our justification, then we could rightfully claim credit for it. But if, like Abraham, our justification is based solely on believing in God promise of what He has already accomplished through Christ *for us*, then God *alone* gets all of the credit and the glory.

(Isaiah 42:8 & 48:11) **"I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols...For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another [I will not share my glory with any man]."**

Q1. In the passage above, God makes it clear that He will not yield or share His glory with anyone or anything. Why do you think God is so concerned about who gets the glory?

Since we are declared righteous in God's sight by believing and not doing (i.e., because our salvation is based on the principle of faith and not works), God alone is *responsible* and God alone is *glorified*. Because our salvation is a free gift and not a reward for something we do, God Himself gets all the credit, the credit that only He deserves. He will not yield His glory to anyone, salvation is by grace through faith only.

(Romans 4:16) **"Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace..."** (NIV)

(Romans 11:6) **"And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."** (NIV)

This is why it is so important that we do not come to God in any other way than with simple childlike faith. We must come His way or not at all. As Charles Spurgeon used to say, "We must come with an empty hand". Any effort on our part to try to atone for (make up for) our sins, or earn forgiveness and eternal life, robs God of the credit and dishonors the cross of Christ. Self-righteousness is truly the worst form of idolatry.

(Ephesians 2:8-9) **"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."** (NIV)

(Galatians 6:14) **"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."** (NIV)

(1 Cor. 1:26-31) **"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord'."** (NIV)

I. Paul Will Not Compromise Justification by Faith (Romans 3:28)

(vs.28) **"For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law."**

Paul is dealing *head on* with those who would suggest that good works, obedience and law-keeping must be added to faith as a condition for justification. Paul again insists that we are not made right with God on "a principle of works, but on the principle of faith".

NLT = New Living Translation, NIV = New International Version, ESV = English Standard Version

Feel free to copy and distribute this content, provided no changes are made and all copyright information is retained.

Content may not be sold. Written by Rob Armstrong ©2016. For more free study materials, visit DiscoverGodsGrace.org

THE MOST IMPORTANT PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE

Discover God's Grace Study Series

It's as if Paul is saying, 'It's just what I have been telling you all along, a person is justified by FAITH, not by obeying the Law of Moses (the 10 commandments, etc.)'.

Note: Romans and the Gospel of John were specifically written to show how a person is made right with God. In these two books alone, the words "faith" and "believe" occur over 150 times!

In the book of Galatians, Paul relates an incident that shows how far he was willing to go to defend the gospel of grace. The Apostle Peter and several other Jewish Christians had just demonstrated their prejudice toward fellow-believers who were *Gentiles* by disassociating with them in favor of associating with fellow-believers who were *Jewish*.

Note: At the time, many Jews in the early Christian church were still insisting that obedience to the law of Moses was a prerequisite for being justified (see Acts 15:1&5). By their hypocritical actions, Peter and his followers were siding with these legalistic Jews, which, of course, was a denial of salvation by grace through faith alone. Peter knew better, but was acting out of peer pressure and fear of these Jews who considered themselves *superior* to Gentile 'sinners'.

When Paul observed that Peter and his followers were clearly *out of line with* the gospel of grace, he did not back down, but stood his ground and confronted Peter on the spot.

(Galatians 2:11-21) **"When Cephas [the name given to Peter by Jesus] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned [i.e., because he was clearly in the wrong]. For before certain men [legalistic Jews from Jerusalem] came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group [the legalistic Jews from Jerusalem]. The other Jews [who were with Peter in Antioch] joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified...I do not set aside the grace of God [i.e., I refuse to set aside the grace of God], for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"** (NIV)

Paul defended the true gospel (which Peter was temporarily denying by his actions) by driving home the point that "a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ". What Paul told Peter is that Jewish people (including both Peter and Paul) have to come to Jesus in exactly the same way as the Gentiles - through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The reason for this is that both Jews and Gentiles alike are sinners (violators of God's law and will). There is nothing about being a Jew (or Gentile) that is of any merit before God. We all stand before Him empty, broken and condemned.

"...no good works to do, no rules to keep, no self-improvement to achieve, no promises to make...To be saved by grace means that we believe God's promise of eternal life rather than try to earn it or merit it in some way. Salvation through faith means that we bring nothing to God except our sin...Grace allows no other options except faith. Being saved simply by grace requires that we receive God's promise simply through faith."

- Dr. Charles Bing (Author of "Simply by Grace")

NLT = New Living Translation, NIV = New International Version, ESV = English Standard Version

Feel free to copy and distribute this content, provided no changes are made and all copyright information is retained.

Content may not be sold. Written by Rob Armstrong ©2016. For more free study materials, visit DiscoverGodsGrace.org