

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

ROMANS 3:28 • TV216B

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Romans 3:28

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

I have been preaching the Gospel of God’s sovereign, redeeming grace for 34 years (next month, in April). Thirty-four years ago, the Lord was pleased to teach me the Gospel of His sovereign grace and His mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord.

First of all: My great desire through these years has really been two-fold. My great desire and chief concern is to glorify God. I want to glorify God.

Secondly: I want to be true to my hearers. I want to give them, not what I think, but what the Word of God says, that you should not receive it as the word of man but as it is truly, the Word of God. I don’t want your faith to stand in the wisdom of a man but in the wisdom, power, and grace of God.

During these 34 years that I have been preaching the Gospel of His glory, there are three or four things that have influenced my ministry greatly. There are three or four things that I have read or three or four things that someone has said in the past which has greatly

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influenced my ministry and me personally. I want to give you some of these things as I work into this message today:

First of all: Richard Baxter made this statement and I don't know how many years ago. It may have been two or three hundred years ago. Richard Baxter the great preacher of the past said this; "I preach as one who may never preach again. This may be my last message, the last time I will ever speak from the Word of God, for the glory of God, and to anyone concerning the things of Christ."

"I preach as one who may never preach again. I preach as a dying man to dying men. I preach as a sinner to sinners. I preach as a man who needs mercy to those who need mercy. I preach as one who is an object of God's grace to those whom I believe ought to be objects of His grace, if they are not."

That has influenced my thinking to a great extent. I preach as one who may never preach again. So, the importance of this hour, the responsibility of this hour weighs heavily upon me and I hope upon you.

Secondly: Roland Hill made this statement; "every message ought to contain the three R's." We talk about the three R's of education, (reading, writing, and arithmetic). There are three R's of preaching, three R's of the Gospel.

Every message ought to contain these three R's. Charles Spurgeon once said that a message that does not contain the three R's really ought not be preached.

What are the three R's? The three R's are: Ruined by the fall or what happened in the Garden, what is the condition of fallen man; that is the first R, (ruined).

Secondly: There is redemption by the blood.

What really happened on the cross of Calvary? Did Christ really redeem a people? Did He effectually bring forth from His wounds, a ransom, so that God might say, "*let him go free; deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom?*" This is redemption by the blood.

Thirdly: The third R is (regeneration by the Holy Spirit).

Is the new birth just a profession or a decision on the part of a sinner? Was he born himself or is the new birth an act of the power of God and the Spirit of God through the seed, the Word of God? He is regenerated and recreated by the Spirit and power of God. That is what the Scripture says it is.

There is ruined, redemption, and regeneration. Those three things have greatly influenced my ministry.

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Thirdly: I read some years ago an article by Bishop J.C. Ryle, a preacher of the past, in which he talked about the great reformation, of four or five hundred years ago. He was under the ministry and leadership of men like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and other men of that day.

He said that the foundation of that great reformation to which we owe so much were three things:

First of all: The Scriptures alone, apart from any writings of men, the Scriptures stand alone as the Word of God.

They are the only rule of faith, the only rule of practice, as the only rule of doctrine; it is just the Scriptures alone. We accept nothing that a man writes, nothing that a man says on an equal plain with the Word of God. It is the Scriptures alone. Everything is weighed by how it appears in the light of Scripture.

Secondly: It is grace alone; salvation is by grace alone.

It is apart from works in any shape, form, or fashion. It is by grace alone; *“for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”* We are saved by the grace of God.

Thirdly: The third foundation of the reformation is Christ alone.

We rejoice only in Christ Jesus. We rest only in Christ Jesus. We look only to Christ Jesus. We build only upon Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus is the only Mediator.

The apostles, the great, so-called martyrs and saints of the past, even Mary, no religious leader or whoever, has any part in the salvation of a sinner’s soul; it is Christ only. It is Christ alone and Scriptures alone. It is grace alone and Christ alone. That has been the foundation of my ministry through the years.

Fourthly: The fourth thing that has influenced me greatly is this, and I don’t even remember who said this; I could probably find out if I had to. I believe it was a Texas preacher, years ago. He said this one night to his congregation; “if my voice is the only voice that you hear; nothing of any eternal or spiritual value will take place in your heart.”

You have to hear Him speak who speaks from heaven. You have to hear Him speak who speaks through His Word. You have to hear Him speak who speaks through His servants; *“Salvation is of the Lord.”* Salvation is not of words, it is not of men, mechanics or methods. It is of the Lord and the Lord only. I believe that.

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We can reason and argue. I hear these fellows having debates and arguing; they are wasting their time because *“the natural man receiveth not the things of God, they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.”*

“Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither has it entered the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. He hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth (the great things of God), the deep things of God.”

It is the Holy Spirit that reveals them. The Gospel is a mystery and has to be revealed by the Holy Spirit. Religion is not the Gospel and religion is not salvation.

The last thing that I care to mention this morning is a Scripture found in **Romans 3:28** that means a great deal. I would say that it is one of the foundations and stones that I have tried to preach and hold through the years and what I am preaching today.

The apostle Paul writes this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It ought to be the foundation of every man’s ministry; while it’s not, it ought to be.

Paul said this in **Romans 3:28**, *“Therefore, we conclude; (this is my conclusion; after examining the character of God and the condition of men, Jew and Gentile), there is no difference; they are all under sin.”*

After writing the first two and one half chapters of the **Book of Romans** and coming to a conclusion, Paul says; *“I conclude;”* this is what I have concluded, when I’ve studied the articles of God, the laws of God, the ways of men, the character of God, and the redemption of God, *“I conclude;”* therefore, we conclude.

This is the holy apostle. This is the chosen apostle to the Gentiles. This is God’s servant, Paul speaking; *“I conclude.”* It seems like everyone would listen to this doesn’t it? It looks like everyone in the world would listen to this.

Paul says, *“I conclude,* after looking at all these things; this is my understanding; this is my conclusion *“that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”* That is my conclusion.

After all my studies, after all of my religion, after all my revelations, after all the teachings, having been taught the Gospel by God Himself; this is my conclusion; *“therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”*

Let me define some words. I am speaking on this subject “justified by faith.” What does the word justified mean? We see that all the way through the Scriptures, justified and justification. What does it mean? Will you listen a moment?

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About three weeks or four weeks ago I was preaching down in the West Indies on a little Island called “Saint Kitts.” I had an invitation to preach in her majesty’s prison, Queen Elizabeth. This island was owned by England.

I had the privilege of speaking to 70 prisoners in her majesty’s prison on Saint Kitts Island in the West Indies. It was a tough prison. It had stone walls and bars. These men were in their prison uniforms. They were all sitting there in front of me.

I wanted to talk to them about a relationship with God. I wanted to preach the Gospel to them. I wanted to talk to them about what I am talking to you about today, justification.

I said to those men; “do you know what the word pardon means?” They nodded their heads. I said, “Of course you do; I am speaking your language.”

In other words, if the Island of Saint Kitts in her majesty’s government has a meeting of the board and decides to pardon you, that means that you get out of prison and you are set free.

But I am saying, even if you are pardoned, you are still guilty. If you committed the crime, you are still guilty. They may pardon you ten thousand times but you are still guilty.

How many of you know the meaning of the word parole? They nodded their heads; they knew what it meant to be paroled. The parole board meets and they go over your records and how you have behaved in prison. They decide the parole and let you go free, provided you report to a parole officer or you are on good behavior.

I said, “Wait a minute! They may parole you but you are still guilty. They may parole you a dozen times but you are still guilty.”

I asked them, “How many of you know what it means to be forgiven?” They nodded their heads. I said, “Well; perhaps the victim, the person you robbed or mistreated, the reason you are in here, writes you a letter and says, ‘I forgive you. I forgive you for robbing my store. I forgive you for all you have done.’” He may say that he forgives you, but you are still guilty.

Then I said, “How many of you know the meaning of the word justified? All of them didn’t shake their heads. I told them that to be justified is not to be pardoned, though it includes a pardon.

To be justified is not to be paroled, although it involves being set free. To be justified does not mean only to be forgiven, though it involves being forgiven. To be justified is to be without guilt, not guilty. That is exactly right!

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Someone said that it means “it is just as if I had never sinned.” We can never be justified before the laws of men because we are guilty of what we have done and what we have said and what we are.

There is a way that we can be justified before God in God’s sight and we must be justified in God’s sight and made holy or God can’t have anything to do with us. He can’t look upon us, He can’t accept us and He can’t receive us. *“Who can stand in His presence: He that hath clean hands and a pure heart?”*

It is not he that hath washed his hands but he that hath clean hands. It is not he that has changed his mind but he that hath a pure heart, *“who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity,”* not one time.

We have to be as holy as God. We have to be without sin, not just pardoned, not just paroled, and not just forgiven. We have to be justified. That is why Job asked so many times; *“how can man be just with God? How can God be just and justify the ungodly. How can he be clean that is born of a woman?”*

He can’t be clean. He can start living a different life right now but his past life is unclean and his present life in God’s sight is unclean.

Listen to this Scripture in **Romans 3:19**; *“Now we know that what things so ever God’s law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, (and that is all of us), that every mouth may be stopped.”* There is no alibi, no excuse, *“and all the world become guilty before God.”* That is where it is, before God, guilty before God.

Just as those men were sitting there in prison and listening to me, were guilty before the State and guilty before the Federal Government. They were guilty before the laws of men.

You and I may not be in prison but we are in God’s prison. We are in prison to the law. We are in bondage to the law. We are guilty before God’s law; we are guilty before God’s throne and we are guilty in God’s sight.

“Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight,” or before God. In His sight we are guilty. The law can never justify the guilty. The law can never pardon the guilty. The law can never declare clean, those who are guilty. The law can only condemn.

You might say, “preacher, how in the name of common sense can a man be just as if he had never sinned when he has sinned?” That is a good question and one that you better find the answer to because in it is the Gospel. We are not going to stand before God unless we are without sin.

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So, I will tell you how we are justified. Paul came to this conclusion; he said, “I come to this conclusion,” knowing the righteousness of the law, knowing the character of God, knowing the inability of men; I come to this conclusion; “*we are justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.*”

It has to be some way other than the obedience to the law because we have never obeyed it. It has to be without the law and that is by faith. The Scripture says; “*Abraham believed God and it was counted to him, (faith was counted to him) for righteousness (for holiness).*”

You see, my friend; the foundation of faith is the Word of God. That is the foundation of faith; “*faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*” Faith is produced as we believe the Word of God. That is the foundation of faith.

We believe God and God is revealed in His Word. To believe His Word is to believe God. To believe God is to believe His Word. The Word is the foundation of faith. God said, “*Abraham, (leave your land) go to a land that I will show you.*” He believed God; he believed His Word and he went.

He said, “*You are going to have a son.*” Abraham was 90 years old and his wife was about that old too. Abraham didn’t know how but he did believe God. He believed God’s Word, therefore, he believed God.

God told him one day, “*Take this son, your only son whom you love, and sacrifice him as a sin-offering to me.*” Abraham went upon the mountain to do it, believing God. He believed God’s Word.

Faith believes the Word. The Word of God is the foundation of faith. It is not in your feelings, not your own human wisdom, not your denominational literature, not your pastors debating and arguing, but the bare, naked, Word of God. That is the foundation of faith.

The object of faith is Christ. It is in a person. I believe God and God is revealed in Christ. “*No man knoweth the Father save the Son, He to whom the Son will reveal Him. He that hath seen me hath seen my Father.*” Christ is the express, exact image, of the Father.

Listen to **Romans 4**; “*Abraham believed God and therefore, it was imputed, (charged to him), for righteousness.*” It was not written for his sake alone, that righteousness was imputed to him by faith. God didn’t write that over and over again, the Word for his sake alone. Abraham knew it.

It was for us also to whom this righteousness shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, “*who was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification.*”

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So, justification is to be totally without fault, guilt, or sin, and to be perfectly holy in God's sight, justified in His sight. This is by faith and it is not by works. It is not by the deeds of religion. It is not by the works of the law.

Let me illustrate: Our Lord gave this illustration to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous before God. These are the people to whom He gave the illustration:

He said, *"Two men went up to the temple to pray. (One was a very religious man), a Pharisee, and the other one was a Publican, (a great sinner). The Pharisee lifted his eyes and hands to heaven and said; God I thank you that I am not like other men."*

"I do these things; I tithe, I give my alms to the poor. I fast twice a week. I am not an adulterer and I am not an extortioner and I am not unjust. I'm not even like that Publican."

Well; the Publican, our Lord said; *"stood far off and he would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but he smote upon his breast and he cried; God be merciful to me a sinner."*

That is fully expressed, "Lord; let thy blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat." Our Lord said, *"This man went to his house justified rather than the other."*

He made no claims to any works or deeds at all. This other fellow talked about the deeds he had done, the works he had performed, the religious requirements he had met and the clean, moral life, that he had lived. Our Lord said that he was not saved and that he was not accepted.

Here is a man who knows that he is a sinner. He is conscience of his sin and cried before God; "give mercy, mercy, mercy, to me through the blood of Christ on the mercy seat." Our Lord said that *"he went home justified."* That's what I am talking about, *"without the deeds of the law."*

You may say today that you've been in church all of your life, you have tried to live right, tried to treat my neighbor right. You may have taught Sunday school, been a deacon, preached, and done all of these things; I'm sorry, that is not the way that men are justified.

We may be accepted before the eyes of men but not in God's sight. You see, sin is a nature and it is a principle, attitude and motive, as much as deed.

I wish I could impress upon you the importance of this verse of Scripture; Paul says, *"therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified (before God without guilt, before God, without sin before God), by faith, (without works), without the deeds of the Law."*

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That is where it has to be done because God is going to judge us, not people who we try to impress. It is “*by faith, (without works), without the deeds of the Law.*” That is the theme of the whole Bible. Four times in the Word of God it says, “*the just shall live by faith.*”

Why do we try to keep changing it? Why do we keep, like thieves and robbers, try to climb up some other way? God said, “*The just shall live by faith.*” Martin Luther found that out, “*the just shall live by faith.*”

Not only is it the theme of the Bible, but justification by faith, holiness by faith, acceptance before God by faith, is what makes the Gospel good news.

Everyone knows the meaning of the word Gospel, (glad tidings, or good news). If I come forth preaching a message that tells you that you have to meet the holy requirements of God to be saved, that is not good news, that is bad news.

I may come telling you that salvation, redemption, and justification, is a gift of God through Christ who fully accomplished it by the obedience of His Son. Christ gave Himself for sinners, Christ died for the ungodly, that is good news.

Justification by faith, it is the cause of every drop of blood that has ever been shed by a martyr. I challenge you; no man has ever been killed for preaching salvation by works. There is no cause to destroy. That is Satan’s message and that is hell’s ministry.

Men aren’t killed because they preach salvation by works. They have been persecuted, hounded, sought asunder, and burned at the stake for preaching justification by faith.

Every drop of blood of noble martyrs from Abel to this present day is because they preach “*Christ and Him crucified.*”

Justification by faith is the only hope for a sinner. It is the only hope for a bonafied, genuine, sinner, that God will be reconciled to us through Christ. It is the only assurance for a believer.

You can’t find any comfort or assurance in your feelings or even in your faith because, like the Centurion, he said; “*Lord I believe; help my unbelief.*” There is no perfect faith on this earth. Nothing about us is perfect. Even our “*righteousness is filthy rags.*”

Justification by faith is the only comfort for the dying bed. If you lay down tonight to die and the Doctor shakes his head and the family assembles around the bed and he says, “you don’t have long to live;” you will not find any comfort in any other outward, visible, religious, signs. You will find comfort in Christ, only in Christ.

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What am I saying? This is what I am saying and I want you to listen to me; Jesus Christ stood, stands, and will stand in my room and in my stead before God. I am a son of Adam, a sinner by birth, a sinner by choice, and a sinner by nature.

I have sinned against God in word, thought, and deed. I have broken His holy law. I have defiled and defied His justice. I am doomed to die. I am under condemnation for sin.

But, the Lord Jesus Christ took my place as my Surety in the Covenant of Grace as my representative, incarnate, and human flesh. Christ took my place as my sacrifice and sin-offering on Calvary's cross and as my Mediator at the right hand of God. He died before God's holy justice in my place.

Now, how can I perish? I have already obeyed God's law and I have already been punished by God's wrath. How can a just God punish me when He punished Christ in my place? I want the answer to that.

If I obeyed the law in Christ then the law can require no more of me, I am holy. If I died when Jesus Christ died on that cross in my substitute, and if "*He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities and by his stripes we are healed,*" are we or aren't we holy?

I am contending for the fact that we are holy. Almighty God has nothing that He can require of me. The law has nothing that it can demand of me; I am justified in Christ. "*There is, therefore now, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*"

"Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

God Almighty says, "*He that believeth hath everlasting life.*" I believe that I have everlasting life. That's it! God Almighty says, "*He that believeth on the Son is not condemned.*" I believe on the Son, therefore, I am not condemned.

God Almighty says, "*All that the Father giveth me will come to me and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.*" I have come to Christ and He won't cast me out.

God Almighty says, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*" I believe, "*therefore, I am saved.*" It is not by works, but by faith.

**"The soul that on Jesus
Hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not,
Desert to its foes**

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**That soul though all hell
Should endeavor to shake
I'll never, no never,
No never, forsake."**