

Studies in Romans

What Justification by Faith Means For Us (3:27-31)

Context

- **1:1-17 Introduction**
- **1:18-4:25 The problem and God's solution**
 - **3:21-4:25 God's solution: justification by faith**
 - 3:21-26 God has revealed a way by which he justly makes people righteous through Jesus' death if they have faith in Him
 - 3:27-4:25 Faith is what God has always wanted – it is the only means by which a person may inherit God's promises
- **5:1-8:39 What it means to be justified by faith**

*What problem has Paul been expounding in the first three chapters of **Romans**?*

“Unanswered questions”—

1. If everyone is *rightly* under God's condemnation, *is there any hope for us?*
2. If God is completely just and faithful, how could He righteously save anyone?

*Is there any hope for us? What is God's solution to mankind's biggest problem? See **Rom. 3:21-26**.*

We explained three important theological words last week. All three words are there in **vv. 24 & 25**:

1. **Justification**
2. **Redemption**
3. **Propitiation**

So, how can God remain completely just and faithful and righteously save rebellious sinners?

This is the essence of the gospel and Paul will now go on to develop this teaching in more detail. In fact, Paul's explanation will continue right up until the end of **chapter 11**, as he makes clear why he is not ashamed to preach this good news to all people.

Paul's presented a very short and simple presentation of the gospel and the good news solution that God has provided for us in Christ. At this point Paul is going to give us three consequences that flow out of these last few verses. What's this gospel mean for us? Paul will give us three implications.

1. **Boasting is excluded (3:27-28)**

The first consequence of all that he has said is: the gospel totally excludes any form of boasting in one's achievement. This first question in **v. 27** is a test for us to see if we really understand the gospel for what it is. One of the greatest tests of our experience of salvation is what we're boasting in.

So, why is “boasting” ruled out?

See **Luke 18:9-14**; **1 Cor. 1:27-31** and **Eph. 2:8-9**.

“By what kind of law?” What kind of a law is it that excludes boasting?

But won't all this talk about *salvation by grace alone through faith alone* lead to a lack of holiness?

A “law of faith”?

2. Distinctions are eliminated (vv. 29-30)

The gospel enables the message of salvation to be the same for the entire world.

See **Eph. 2:15** and **Acts 4:12**.

3. The law is established (v. 31)

“Uphold the law”? Paul's answer is: the gospel is the fulfilling of the law. The gospel is what the law was pointing to the entire time.

Sam Storms provides a list of possibilities as to what Paul means by the law being established or upheld by the gospel. Here are three of them:

- In the sense that the OT Scriptures testify to justification being by faith alone. Or,
- In the sense that the law convicts us of sin and awakens us to our need for justification by faith alone. Or,
- In the sense that our faith fulfils the law because it is fulfilled in Christ in whom we believe (cf. **8:4**).

For further discussion

(Perhaps choose one or more to think about further or to discuss in a group)

- *What is the main conclusion Paul draws from the doctrine of justification by grace (3:27, 28)?*
- *No boasting! What kind of things are we likely to boast about?*
- *Thinking back to Paul's main purposes for writing this letter to the Romans, how does this passage accomplish those purposes?*