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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **By Faith Alone: Boasting Excluded, Gentiles Included, the Law Upheld**

### **Romans 3:27-31**

#### I. By Faith Alone

Luther's translation & the Reformation slogan *sola fide*

##### A. A Transitional Paragraph

1. Gospel clearly expounded: Three Great Accomplishments of the Cross of Christ

- Justification: legal declaration of ungodly people as completely clear from guilt
- Propitiation: complete removal of God's wrath from all who believe in Christ
- Demonstration: God's perfect justice is upheld despite salvation of the ungodly

2. Separation from Law clearly declared

***Romans 3:21 "But now a righteousness from God APART FROM LAW has been made known, to which the Law and the prophets testify."***

3. Means of connection clearly declared: BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

***Romans 3:22-24 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.***

4. Focus now (to end of Ch. 4): the absolute sufficiency of FAITH ALONE...

Faith contrasted with

- "works of the law" 3:28 "works" 4:1-8 (Abraham & David) "circumcision" 4:9-12
- "law" 4:13-16 "sight" 4:17-22

##### B. Characteristics of this great salvation

1. Asserts the love of God

BUT this theme more fully developed in Romans 5

***Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”***

2. Asserts the justice of God (vs. 25-27)

Now, three additional aspects to complete this Gospel

Excludes all boasting   Includes Gentiles & Jews alike   Establishes the Law

## II. Faith Alone Excludes Boasting

***vs. 27-28 “Where then is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”***

### A. Paul’s Concern Over Boasting

1. Word usage in Paul’s writings
  - a. spoke of the concept at least 55 times!
  - b. root idea: “to glory in” or “to put reliance on”
  - c. some boasting is good, even commanded

***1 Corinthians 1:31 “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”***

***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.”***

***2 Corinthians 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.***

- d. the issue here: boasting before God on Judgment Day
2. Paul the ladder climber: boasting fueled it all
  - a. putting together a spiritual resumé

b. Paul's example of boasting

***Philippians 3:4-6*** “***If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.***”

It's all RUBBISH... it will gain nothing but wrath on Judgment Day!!!

3. Jewish boasting an issue: Romans 2:17 “You boast about God...”

4. Greater issue: personal boasting before God

***Romans 4:2*** “***If Abraham were justified by works, he had something to boast about; BUT NOT BEFORE GOD!!!***”

Like a peddler peddling wares, we step up to God's throne of judgment and start making our boasts... “I did this, I did that...” That boasting leads straight to hell!!!

B. Why God HATES Boasting

1. God utterly despises PRIDE... because it is SELF-WORSHIP, and that is IDOLATRY

a. pride the root of Satan's fall

***Ezekiel 28:17*** “***Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.***”

***1 Timothy 3:6*** “***He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.***”

b. pride the root of our sin as well... exchanging the glory of God for an idol

***Isaiah 2:10-18*** “***Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty! The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day... and the idols will totally disappear.***”

2. Self-sufficiency the extension of self-worship

3. Works salvation is idolatry

4. Therefore: boasting MUST be EXCLUDED... or it is NO SALVATION AT ALL!!!

***1 Corinthians 1:28-30 “He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are,<sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him.<sup>30</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus”***

C. How, Then, Is Boasting Excluded?

1. God’s salvation MUST destroy human pride/boasting
2. The Law of works will NEVER do this... it actually increases guilt
3. Faith alone excludes boasting... because faith is not a work

***Ephesians 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves it is the gifts of God, not by works so that no one can boast.”***

Luther: “Faith is not a work... Can anyone be found so foolish as to regard a promise he has received or an inheritance he has been given as a good work on his part?”

4. Faith is passive, looks outward, receives

NOTE: We are not justified BECAUSE of our faith, we are justified by and through our faith... it is merely a conduit; the cause of our justification (Rom. 3:21-26) is EXTERNAL TO US

D. Justification By Faith ALONE

1. Luther’s addition: SOLA

***vs. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith APART FROM observing the law.***

***Romans 4:5 “But to the man who DOES NOT WORK but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited to him as righteousness.”***

2. Works of the Law brought for justification UTTERLY REPUGNANT to God
3. Such a strong tendency it must be repeated again and again

III. Faith Alone Includes Jews and Gentiles

***vs. 29-30 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith***

A. Justification By Law Leaves Gentiles Out: “Dividing Wall” excluded Gentiles

Circumcision, dietary laws, marriage laws, worship laws... ALL excluded Gentiles

Piper: Old Testament religion by and large "Come & see"... NT "Go and tell"

B. Only One God: Creator of the World

1. The Shema: The Eternal Unity and Holiness of God

***Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."***

2. Polytheism: Every nation, every hill, every natural effect controlled by a god

3. God of the Jews is also God of the Gentiles

4. Modern paganism: God for me, and God for you

C. Only One Way to God: Savior of the World

1. One God and One Way

a. God COULD have made many ways... but HE DIDN'T

b. Christ's blood only entry

***Hebrews 10:19-20 "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body"***

c. Christ only mediator

***1 Timothy 2:5 "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."***

2. Romans 3:21-26... Justification, Propitiation, Demonstration... all through the Son

3. Exclusivity of Christianity... very unpopular!!

More & more inclusivity in American Christianity: controversy over IMB prayer guides

4. Modern paganism: one mountain, many paths, one spectacular view

***BUT... Acts 4:12 "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."***

D. Justification By Faith Alone Includes Jews and Gentiles

1. Justification by faith alone includes all peoples
2. No special paths, no separate paths
3. One Gospel message for all the world

#### E. Difficult for Jews to Accept

1. God IS God of Jews only!!
2. Gentile “dogs” excluded
3. BUT “One new man”, dividing wall gone
  - a. universal problem of sin... same everywhere; sin renders distinctions obsolete

***Romans 3:22 “There is no difference, for ALL have sinned and lack the glory of God...”***

- b. so does Christ’s atonement

***Ephesians 2:11-22 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. He purpose was to create one new man out of the two ...”***

Incredible power to destroy racism, all hostility based on national differences... everyone gets saved the same way!!

4. Danger of Dispensationalism
  - a. permanent separation between Jews and Gentiles
  - b. Gentiles in heaven, Jews on earth
  - c. two different paths

## IV. Faith Alone Establishes the Law

### A. Constant Attacks on the Law?

1. Paul’s statements

***Romans 3:20-21 “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law.... But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known....***

vs. 28 ***“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”***

2. But what about Christ?

a. Sermon on the Mount

***Matthew 5:17-18 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.***

b. YET... it shows Jesus & Paul on same track... both must answer same questions

It SEEMED that Christ was abolishing the Law & the Prophets... so he had to make the statement; so also it SEEMS that Christ’s apostle Paul is abolishing the Law

3. Problem: if Law is nullified, why did God give it?

a. Gk. word “nullify” = “make of no account”, “render purposeless”

b. does law have no purpose? Of course it has a purpose!! BUT NOT TO EFFECT JUSTIFICATION

***Galatians 2:21 “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”***

c. key issue here: what is the purpose of the Law

B. No... Faith Alone Establishes the Law

***“Do we then make the Law as if it had no purpose at all? May it never be!!! On the contrary, we establish the Law.”***

1. Justification by faith alone ESTABLISHES the Law

a. Paul’s strong response: “May it never be!!!”

b. Paul’s strong statement: Gk. for “establish”

Image: putting the Law on a permanent foundation... very similar to Christ

***Matthew 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.***

Law has a permanent place in the salvation plan of God

2. Only gospel establishes the Law
  - a. Christ came to fulfill the Law

***Matthew 5:17 "I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."***

- b. Christ's gospel then establishes the Law
  - c. actually... ONLY this message establishes the Law
3. All other systems destroy the Law
  - a. works righteousness NOT the point of Law
  - b. God's cry through Isaiah

***Isaiah 1:11-13 "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings!"***

- c. David's cry to God

***Psalms 51:16-17 "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."***

- d. common message: Law does not bring justification from sin!!
  - e. therefore, using Law obedience to pay for sin actually destroys the Law

C. How the Gospel Establishes the Law

1. Christ's Perfect Fulfillment of the Law External to Us
  - a. active obedience
    - i) constantly, moment by moment under the Father's Law

***Galatians 4:4 "When the time has fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law."***

***John 8:29 "I always do what pleases him."***



***John 15:10 "I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love."***

ii) most especially, in dying on the Cross

***Philippians 2:8 "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"***

b. passive demonstration: receiving Law's punishment on Cross

Every requirement of the Law fully upheld, every penalty fully paid for by the Cross...  
ONLY the CROSS upholds the Law

## 2. Christ's Fulfillment of the Law Within Us

a. the Law which made a distinction between Jews & Gentiles is OVER

b. BUT there is a Law which still remains... the Law of LOVE

***Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.***

***Romans 13:8-10 ...he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.***

c. BUT these are the very Laws we've never been able to fulfill

d. CHRIST fulfilled them in His life, and now fulfills them in US by His Spirit

***Romans 8:1-4 ...in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.***

The Gospel alone enables us to fulfill Gods enduring law of love... by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit... WE ESTABLISH THE LAW!!!

## V. Summary and Application

### A. Summary

1. Transition: clear statement of Gospel (3:21-26) to clear understanding BY FAITH ALONE

2. Three additional aspects:

a. Faith alone excludes boasting

b. Faith alone includes Gentiles AND Jews

c. Faith alone upholds the Law

## B. Application

1. Concerning boasting: “to glory in” “to trust & rely upon”

*Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord*

*May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*

*Therefore, I will gladly boast in weaknesses*

**NOT in your own achievements, basic goodness, heritage, religiosity**

2. Concerning inclusion: one God, one Gospel for everyone

- Lift up your voice and deny the paganism and polytheism of our day
- There are not many Gods, many ways, many paths up the mountain
- Justification by faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone is the only way

3. Concerning the Law

- Rejoice that every letter of the Law of God was upheld and fulfilled by Christ
- Realize you can never perfectly uphold the Law by your flesh
- Realize that the Holy Spirit was given to you that you might obey the Law of Love
- Walk in the commandments by the power of the Spirit