

NO BOASTING HERE

(Romans 3:27-31)

INTRODUCTION

It's human nature to want to boast about our accomplishments. When we get good grades at school, we say, "Hey Mom! Look at my report card! Look at all the A's and B's! Isn't it great?!"

And when we do well with our new diet, we tell our friends, "Guess what? I've lost 15 pounds and two dress sizes! This is the lightest I've been in five years! I feel like a new woman!"

And when we get a new gadget, we want to show it to others and boast how great it is. Like I got a new Blackberry Bold lately and I've been showing it off to my friends.

We like the attention. We like the affirmation. We like the pat on the back. There's nothing wrong with feeling a sense of satisfaction over what God has done and how God has blessed.

But when we start boasting about what WE have done to gain a standing with God rather than what Christ has done for our salvation, that's when we have crossed the line. That's when we run into trouble. That's when we are in danger of committing the sins of pride and of self-centeredness and boasting in the wrong way.

Paul brings up the subject of boasting in 3:27. He asks, "**Where then is boasting?**" in verse 27. And he answers, "**It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.**" Then in Romans 4:2 he raises the issue again: "**For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**" So the matter of boasting is important to Paul. And it is also important to understand why justification by faith excludes boasting.

WHY PAUL BRINGS UP BOASTING?

Why did Paul raise the issue of boasting in the first place? I believe that partly it was because he knew that his fellow Jews had a real problem with boasting. In chapter 2 verses 17 and 23 Paul had mentioned that the Jews boasted in the law, i.e. in their having the law and keeping the law. You would think that this is good, but it was boasting in a way that made them think that they were superior to others.

Jesus dealt with this same attitude in Luke 18:9-14 in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Remember he told the parable about these two men went to the temple to pray and the Pharisee prayed, (Luke 18:11-12 NKJV) **"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. {12} 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'** And the publican just stood off at a distance and prayed, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.!" Jesus concluded by saying, **"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

You see boasting in our religious practices reflects a heart that is not willing to admit the depth of our guilt and a heart that is not willing to trust in God's grace.

This is one reason Paul brings up the subject of boasting. Another reason is that boasting is an outward sign of the inward sin of pride. Human pride has always been in opposition to God.

Pride is what caused Satan to oppose God and fall.

Adam and Eve's sin stemmed from pride when Satan tempted them saying that if they disobeyed God they could be like God. Pride and boasting was a form of rejecting God's authority over us.

In the context of Romans 'pride' and 'boasting' are mentioned as sins which reveal a rejection of God. In verse 1:25: **"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator."** A prideful person may still worship, but it is not the God the Bible he is worshipping.

Thus in the middle of verse 30 we read in the list of sins: **"backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents..."** Here Paul is explicit about the depth of pride in the fallen human heart.

So boasting matters to Paul because boasting is the outward form of the deep, root-problem of the human race, pride. God always resists the proud and exalts the humble.

Boasting shows that we are not humbling ourselves before God!

GOD ACCOMPLISHED OUR SALVATION WITHOUT OUR HELP

So how does God deal with our pride and boasting in our salvation?

The answer is given in Romans 3:21-26, and part of the answer is that God saves us in a way that doesn't need our help. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to suffer and die in the place of proud, ungodly sinners. Through faith God declares us righteous, not in ourselves, but because He gives us the gift of Christ's righteousness as the basis of our standing with God. Thus we can not boast in ourselves in salvation because it is all of God! Salvation is by grace!

This is what Paul says in 3:24

(Rom 3:24 NKJV) being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Paul makes the same point in those memorable verses in Ephesians.

(Eph 2:8-9 NKJV) "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Receiving salvation as a gift excludes boasting! We have to humble ourselves before God by admitting that we are not only guilty sinners before Him, but we are helpless to save ourselves apart from his gift of righteousness.

Salvation is a gift!

FAITH IS TRUSTING IN GOD, NOT IN OURSELVES AND LEAVES NO ROOM FOR BOASTING

Another way God deals with our pride is to make salvation by faith. Boasting is excluded by the "law of faith."

(Rom 3:27 NKJV) Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

If we are saved by the works of the law we would have whereof to boast because we could point to our law keeping as the part we contributed to our salvation. So salvation by the works of the law does not exclude boasting. Only salvation by faith excludes boasting. Why? Because faith looks at Christ, not ourselves. Faith looks to God for all of salvation, not at the part we may supply.

(Rom 3:28 NKJV) Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

The reformers in the Reformation made the phrase 'by faith alone' one of its hallmarks.

It is by faith alone that we are justified or declared righteous, not faith plus our works. This is why the old illustration about the man in the boat with two oars, one representing faith and the other our works, is wrong. It is not faith and works, it is faith alone that excludes boasting.

Depending on “works of the law” calls attention to the worker and the work and expects what is due. Working does not exclude boasting, it supports boasting. Faith does not call attention to itself, but to the grace of the one trusted. Faith Calls Attention to the One Who Is Trusted.

Note that Paul goes on to make the point that by faith alone is God’s only way of salvation.

This is God’s one and only way of salvation. God’s way of salvation is the same for both the Jews and the Gentiles. God has only one way of salvation and that is He declares the guilty sinner to be righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.

(Rom 3:29-30 NKJV) Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, {30} since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith

During an exclusive golf outing for top business and entertainment executives on October 9, 2006 Tiger Woods was put on the spot by an evangelical guest of Nike.

That day, 30 people gathered at the Trump golf course in Los Angeles for the 2006 “Tee It Up with Tiger Woods” event, which included a private golf session and lunch with the living legend. During the lunch, there was a question-and-answer session with Tiger. Most people asked about their swings or golf questions.

However, one guest of Nike stood up and asked about his religious faith.

A source present at the lunch said later: “You could have heard a pin drop. People were mortified. But Tiger was as unflappable as he is on the golf course.”

Tiger said, “My father was a Christian—of course Christianity was part of my life. But my mother is Asian, and Buddhism was also part of my childhood. So I practice both faiths respectfully.”

With due respect to tiger Woods one can not practice both faiths. Biblical Christianity has an exclusive type of faith, it is faith in Christ alone!

We live at a time in which people think that there are many ways to God. But, there is only one way. And that one way is through faith in Jesus Christ as our propitiation, as our redemption, as our Righteousness. All other religions and many interpretations of Christianity are ways of works and gives man the right to boast in ourselves, our religious ardor, our willingness to live in self-denial, whatever, but not God or Christ. This is why boasting is so damning a sin.

CONCLUSION

Boasting before God is a reflection of pride, which is sin. God deals with our pride by providing a way of salvation that is by faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

Which way are you seeking to be saved? By deeds of the law or by the law of faith?

Two Kentucky farmers who owned racing stables had developed a keen rivalry. One spring, each of them entered a horse in local steeplechase. Thinking that a professional rider might help him outdo his friend, one of the farmers engaged a crack jockey.

The two horses were the leading the race at the last fence, but it proved too tough for them. Both horses fell, unseating their riders.

But, this calamity did not stop the professional jockey. He quickly remounted and won the race.

Returning triumphant to the paddock, the jockey found the farmer who had hired him fuming with rage. "What's the matter," asked the jockey. "I won didn't I?" "Oh, yes," roared the farmer. "You won all right, but you still don't know, do you?"

"Know what?" asked the jockey. "You won the race on the wrong horse!"

Don't come to the finish line of life and find out that you were on the wrong horse, the horse of your efforts to give you the proper standing before God. Choose faith in Christ alone.

Amen? Amen!