

## Romans 3B

- Gospel worksheet review
- Paul ends chapter 3 with a defense of our justification by faith alone
  - I'm sure Paul anticipated the negative reaction his message would have with many in his audience
    - But especially the Jew
    - Because the Jew had been conditioned to believe that redemption depended on some inherent qualification or status among those who were saved
      - Jewish birthright
      - Keeping of the Law
  - And the same problem still exists today
    - People still approach this topic with assumptions about what's required to enter heaven
      - Certain works, qualifications, some effort
      - The history of Christianity is littered with factions, denominations and theologies that have tried to add some measure of human worth or human work to God's grace
    - So Paul launches a preemptive strike here

[Rom. 3:27](#) ¶ Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

[Rom. 3:28](#) For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

[Rom. 3:29](#) Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

[Rom. 3:30](#) since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

- Where there is boasting?
  - The Greek word can be translated proud self-confidence
    - Paul asks is there any room in God's plan for man's pride or boasting of self?
      - Paul says it is excluded (ekkleio) – shut out
  - It wasn't just unnecessary or inappropriate
    - It was specifically shut out by God
      - He designed the plan of redemption in such a way that no man could ever legitimately boast about his righteousness before God
  - Paul ask what kind of law can declare men righteous but do so in such a way that it excludes boasting by men?
    - Can a law of works accomplish this?
      - Clearly not
      - If we obtain righteousness by any work we can perform, then we have something to boast about
    - It is a law of faith
      - God has established a law that brings men God's righteousness
        - This law doesn't depend on human agency
        - It is a law that provides a gift resulting in a man having faith and trust in God's work
      - A law with only one requirement – faith in Christ
        - And that faith itself was a gift
        - Leaving men nothing whatsoever to boast about

[Eph. 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

[Eph. 2:9](#) not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- While Paul may have been specifically addressing the Jewish mindset within this church, it's equally true for us today
  - We (the orthodox Church) maintain that men are justified by faith apart from the works of the Law
- Young's Literal Translation...

[Rom. 3:27](#) Where then [is] the boasting? it was excluded; by what law? of works? no, but by a law of faith:

[Rom. 3:28](#) therefore do we reckon a man to be declared righteous by faith, apart from works of law.

- Apart from works of law – any law
  - Any view of our salvation that introduces the requirement of human works according to any law (rule) has departed from Christianity
  - William Newell:

"... He *has* sent His Son, who *has* borne sin for you. You do not look to Christ to do something to save you: He *has done it* at the cross. You simply receive God's testimony as true... (I often quote I Timothy 1.15 to inquiring sinners: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' In response to my question, they confess that 'came' is in the past tense. Then I say, 'How sad that you and I were not there, so that He might have saved us, for He has now gone back to heaven!' This shuts them up to contemplate the work Christ *finished when He was here*; upon which work, and God's Word concerning it, sinners must rest: *that is faith*.) You rest in God's Word regarding Christ and His work for you. You rest in Christ's shed blood."

- This argument that salvation is apart from the law isn't a concept that a Jew could accept upon first hearing
  - This is going to take some time to sink in
    - And so Paul is determined to put as many nails as possible in the coffin of works through the law
  - So Paul begins with a simple observation
    - Paul asks is God the God of Jews only? No
      - God is God of all humanity
    - Therefore God couldn't have a different plan of salvation for one group of humanity over another

- For God is working in all mankind through the same means
  - The Law was only given to the Jews
    - So it couldn't be the key to salvation, otherwise Gentiles wouldn't have been included in salvation
- But God is working to justify not only the circumcised Jew but also the uncircumcised Gentile – both through faith
  - Do you think that observation settled the point for the Jew?
    - Hardly
- Paul asks the question that many Jew would be asking at this point

[Rom. 3:31](#) ¶ Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

- A powerful verse
  - It can be understood simply yet it's very complex
    - In a sense, the rest of Paul's letter is an explanation of this one verse
    - By that I mean Paul uses the rest of the letter to explain all the ways the Law is established in us through faith
  - Paul says "Am I suggesting that God's use of a law of faith to grant righteousness nullifies (katargeo) – abolish, bring to an end – the Mosaic Law?
    - Not at all
      - On the contrary, we establish it (or confirm it or make it stand)
  - How so?
    - Well, if we are to understand the Law's purpose properly, we need to see it from two complimentary sides
    - First as a pattern of holiness (standard)
      - He said the Law shuts up everyone under condemnation because no one can meet its standards

- Paul has already explained that purpose in chapters 2 & 3
- Secondly, the Law also described the plan of grace that God intended to men to recognize (treasure map with clues leading to salvation)
  - This second side of the Law becomes the focus in chapter 4 as Paul works to prove that God has always saved by faith rather than law
- So says that when men establish or fulfill the Law when they demonstrate faith
  - Because by faith, men receive God's righteousness
    - A righteousness that the Law demands
    - They finally gain the power to meet the terms of the Law, by resting in Christ's works rather than their own
  - Secondly, when men obey the law of faith and are justified, the Law's ultimate purpose is being fulfilled in that moment
    - It's true purpose is to lead me to Christ
    - So when someone trusts in the Messiah, they have discovered the treasure that the map directed them toward
    - They fulfill the Law
- On the other hand, without the gift of faith, the Law could never be met by men
  - So ironically, the only way the Law could be fulfilled is through grace by faith
- Do you think this argument settled the issue for the Jew?
  - Probably not.
  - So Paul launches into a defense using the life of Abraham as his example

[Rom. 4:1](#) ¶ What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

[Rom. 4:2](#) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

[Rom. 4:3](#) For what does the Scripture say? " ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

- Paul's opening lines could be read this way
  - What did Abraham, our patriarch, discover on this topic?
    - If Abraham had been justified by works, then he would have been famous for that achievement
    - He would have no doubt boasted over such a great accomplishment
      - "Abraham...he was found righteous because of his perfect life and impeccable behavior"
  - But Abraham never boasted like that before God
    - In fact, the scriptures tell us specifically how Abraham received his declaration of righteousness from God
    - Abraham believed God and it (his faith) was credited to him as righteousness

[Gen. 15:1](#) ¶ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying,

" Do not fear, Abram,  
I am a shield to you;  
Your reward shall be very great."

[Gen. 15:2](#) Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

[Gen. 15:3](#) And Abram said, " Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

[Gen. 15:4](#) Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

[Gen. 15:5](#) And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, " So shall your descendants be."

[Gen. 15:6](#) Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

- Abraham is childless
  - He and his wife are in their seventies and are past child-bearing years
    - They have no earthly hope of ever having children
  - Then God appeared to Abraham and made a promise
    - He said you will have descendent so numerous they will be like the stars of the sky
    - And based solely on the promise of God's word, Abraham believed God
      - At that moment scripture says Abraham believed that he would in fact bear children despite his advanced age
      - And on the basis of that belief, God counted Abraham righteous