

40. The Book of Romans 3:27-28-Part 1

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(1-31-24)

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This evening we find ourselves in the second major section of the Book of Romans. We've entitled this section '**Justification**' because in it Paul tells us how a person is made righteous or '*right*' with God.

If someone asks you how they get to heaven—this section tells you what to say to them.

And primarily, you need to tell them that only people who are as righteous as Jesus will be allowed into heaven—that no matter how moral or religious they are, they will never be good enough to be allowed entrance into heaven. That's because heaven is only for *perfect* people!

When they respond, "*That's impossible!*" you can then say to them, "*Yes, by human ability living a sinless life is impossible—but with God all things are possible.*"

Then you can share with them that God is offering Jesus' perfect righteousness to anyone who repents of their sins and receives Jesus into their heart as their Savior—by **faith**.

But here's the problem—there are 2 kinds of faith: *true* faith and *false* faith—genuine faith and counterfeit faith.

➤ "*How do I know the difference?*"—well, I'd like to look at that tonight.

As we just said, this whole section deals with the doctrine of justification—which comes by faith alone.

This doctrine is at the very heart and soul of the gospel of Jesus Christ and all N.T. theology—and yet many Christians today couldn't even define *justification* let alone explain it with regard to salvation.

One well known Christian apologist and author tells us why the modern church is full of biblically deficient and theologically ignorant Christians—

"Why don't we hear more about justification today? Why when we turn on the radio and listen to radio programs—why do we not hear a tremendous amount of discussion about this subject? It's because it is a theological concept, and we are in what must be described as an anti-theological age. Many today in the modern church feel that theology and doctrine are dry husks of a past age (they are looking for something new, exciting, and relevant to their modern lives)—not recognizing that theology and doctrine are simply our knowledge of God. They are simply what the Scriptures teach us about Who God is and what He's about in this world."

Romans 3:24, 27-28 (NKJV)

²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...²⁷ **Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law ['principle'] of faith.** ²⁸ **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**

1 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it [*not earned it*], why do you boast as if you had not received it [*as a gift of God's grace*]?

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Let me read verses 27 and 28 from the NLT:

Romans 3:27-28 (NLT)

²⁷ Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸ So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

Galatians 2:16, 21 (NKJV)

¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified...

²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Galatians 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "*the just shall live by faith.*"

It all comes down to faith! Everything Jesus did—everything God is offering us means nothing without faith—which is how justification is appropriated.

So, God tells us in His Word that we are justified (saved) by faith—but faith can be *counterfeited*.

So, how can we know that our faith is genuine—that it is true saving faith?

There are a lot of people who identify with Christianity, and if you were to ask them would say, "*I believe in Christ*" but how do we know they are really saved.

To which many would no doubt respond—"You can't know! You can't see into their heart, so how can we know? Therefore, you can't say that someone is not saved—besides Jesus said that we are not to judge."

Jesus said that we are not to judge the motives of the heart—but He did say we are to judge the actions of a person's life when He said that we would know them by their fruit—which begs the question, "*What are the fruits of saving faith?*"

Here's a little test you can use.

I'm going to give you a list of things that *don't* prove saving faith—"Then why even give us this list?"—Because you may be surprised at what they are! Many Christians believe these are the evidence of true saving faith—let's go through them and see what you think!

Qualities that don't prove saving faith

1. Visible morality

Matthew 19:16–22 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” ¹⁷ So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “ ‘*You shall not murder,*’ ‘*You shall not commit adultery,*’ ‘*You shall not steal,*’ ‘*You shall not bear false witness,*’ ¹⁹ ‘*Honor your father and your mother,*’ and, ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ ” ²⁰ The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

2. Biblical knowledge

There are a lot of people who know the Bible and can rattle off verses.

These would include the Scribes and Pharisees who Jesus said searched the Scriptures constantly looking for eternal life—in fact, there were numerous scribes who had memorized the Torah verbatim (not to mention the devil who knows the Bible and can no doubt recite it verse by verse).

Romans 2:17–20, 23-24 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, ¹⁸ and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, ¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law...

²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? ²⁴ For “*the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,*” as it is written.

3. Faithful church attendance

There are people who go to church faithfully—but are not saved. I have known Roman Catholics that went to mass every day but weren't born-again.

As someone has said, “*Going into a church doesn't make you a Christian anymore than going into a bakery makes you a bagel!*”

4. Outward piety

Matthew 23:25–28 (NKJV)

²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. ²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Matthew 12:43–45 (NKJV)

⁴³ “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. ⁴⁴ Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

Be careful of ‘*reformation without regeneration.*’

The danger of religious reformation which stops short of true regeneration is that it gives people a false sense that they have a relationship with God simply because they’re going to church and staying away from some of their old sins (alcohol, drugs, pornography etc.).

J. Vernon McGee—

“In other words, reformation is no good. My friend, you can quit doing many things, but that won’t make you a Christian. If everyone in the world would quit sinning right now, there wouldn’t be any more Christians in the next minute or in the next day, because quitting sin doesn’t make Christians. Reformation is not what we need”.

5. Serving in ministry

A prime example of someone who can be involved in ministry for the Lord and not be saved is Judas—

John 6:70–71 (NKJV)

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

John 13:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” ¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

And yet Judas served Jesus in ministry—

Luke 9:1–2, 6 (NKJV)

¹ Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. ² He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick... ⁶ So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere [including Judas].

Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

6. Guilt over sin

Before Martin Luther got saved, he was always so guilty over his sins that he wore out the priest who he pestered with constant confessions.

Judas felt so guilty that he had betrayed Jesus he went out and hanged himself.

"Mental institutions are filled with people who are racked with guilt over sin, they have just never been able to find any release."

7. Assurance of salvation

Matthew 7:22 (NLT)

²² On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.'

Romans 10:2–3 (NKJV)

² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Their "*righteousness*" was inoculative—they had just enough self-righteousness to make them immune to the real thing. That is the danger of *religion* as opposed to a relationship and why being "lukewarm" is the most dangerous condition a person can be in—it gives them a false assurance of salvation.

If simply believing you're a Christian makes you a Christian—there would be no such thing as being deceived by false hopes and false teachers.

8. A past decision for Christ

When I say this, I mean people who have walked the aisle, prayed the prayer to accept Jesus as their Savior—but have no real fruit—there is no evidence that they are really born-again.

Once again, Jesus said we would know the true from the false by their fruit. This was something the James echoed—

James 2:14, 17-18, 26 (NKJV)

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?...
¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works...
²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Just because you raised your hand, walked down the aisle, prayed a prayer, signed a card...doesn't necessarily mean you are now a true child of God.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

The word '**disqualified**' in the Greek means '*phony*,' '*counterfeit*.'

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#). Reach out to us [here](#).