

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 3

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write to the believers in Rome and us today about the fundamentals of Christianity.

This is a letter that is filled with our doctrinal foundation.

It explains Christianity

It shows us – who we are and what we are

Where we stand and what we are all about

And Paul lays all of it out for us in this letter

And this is why this book is such a life changing/transforming epistle.

So many lives have been transformed by this book – why?

Because they understood and began to grasp the foundation – which is – we are saved by grace alone through faith alone through Christ alone.

And once we begin to grasp the firm foundation – and sometimes it takes time -

God begins to build upon it and He begins to do this amazing work in us and through us and it is just awesome.

We will never be the same.

Let's pray...

Read Text

Now, for most of the first three chapters in Romans – Paul has spared no expense to make sure that we realize something very simple but at the same time something very challenging for us to accept.

And that is that we are not perfect.

We have never been perfect.

We have never had a perfect day in our lives

And people don't like to hear that –

They will say something like – “That is why I don't read the bible because the bible is negative.

But the bible is realistic.

None of us have ever been our best self every single day of our lives – and because of this, this is why Jesus came and suffered and died for us.

Paul knows this -

Paul took his time and systematically unpacked all these groups: those who walk in outright rebellion, the self-righteous individuals and the religious individuals and reveals to us that every one of us, is a sinner in need of a Savior.

No matter how good or how bad our life has been

No matter what kind of mess we have gotten ourselves in to or how much good we may think we have done

We are in need of a Savior

We all have a fallen short of the glory of God

We have all fallen short of His perfect standard

There is no righteousness in us apart from Christ

And so last week –

As Paul finished his argument on how broken humanity is

He began to give us the good news

And he began to give us the good news with two words –

I had you make a note of them

“BUT GOD”

We are broken, sinners in need of a Savior –

But God, has chosen to justify us freely by the redemption in Christ Jesus

We have been saved freely or justified freely by His grace

This means that God does not require anything from us

It did not cost us anything.

We cannot do absolutely anything that will contribute to our salvation -

But we have to understand that our salvation did cost Jesus everything

Although it is freely given, it was not cheap.

Let's look at verse 25 again

[Rom 3:25-26 NKJV] 25 whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

So again, we must realize that grace is free – but not cheap

Jesus willingly took the cross

He knew God would be glorified as He laid His life for you and me.

Now, let's look at our text -

[Rom 3:27-31 NKJV] 27 Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

We like to feel good about ourselves, and one of the things we do to make ourselves feel better is to “boast” about what we’ve done or who we are.

And there is something about taking credit that always seems to get us in trouble.

The Apostle Paul is making a contrast between the law of works and the law of faith

The law of works promotes boasting.

Look at what I have done.

I have kept the commandments

I have observed the religious feasts

I have not killed anyone

The law of works encourages people to stand before God and state the following -

I am more deserving than others.

I have achieved more than others.

I am more sufficient than others.

I have never needed anybody but myself – I did it.

And so, the law of works brings focus on where it doesn't belong – and that is, me.

“on self”

It causes the individual to look at the world in relation to themselves and he or she begins to think that they are the source of sustenance

They are the source of provision and purpose and meaning and significance and acceptance.

It is all about me.

Our society says – believe in yourself

And the bible gently but firmly says look away from self.

Why?

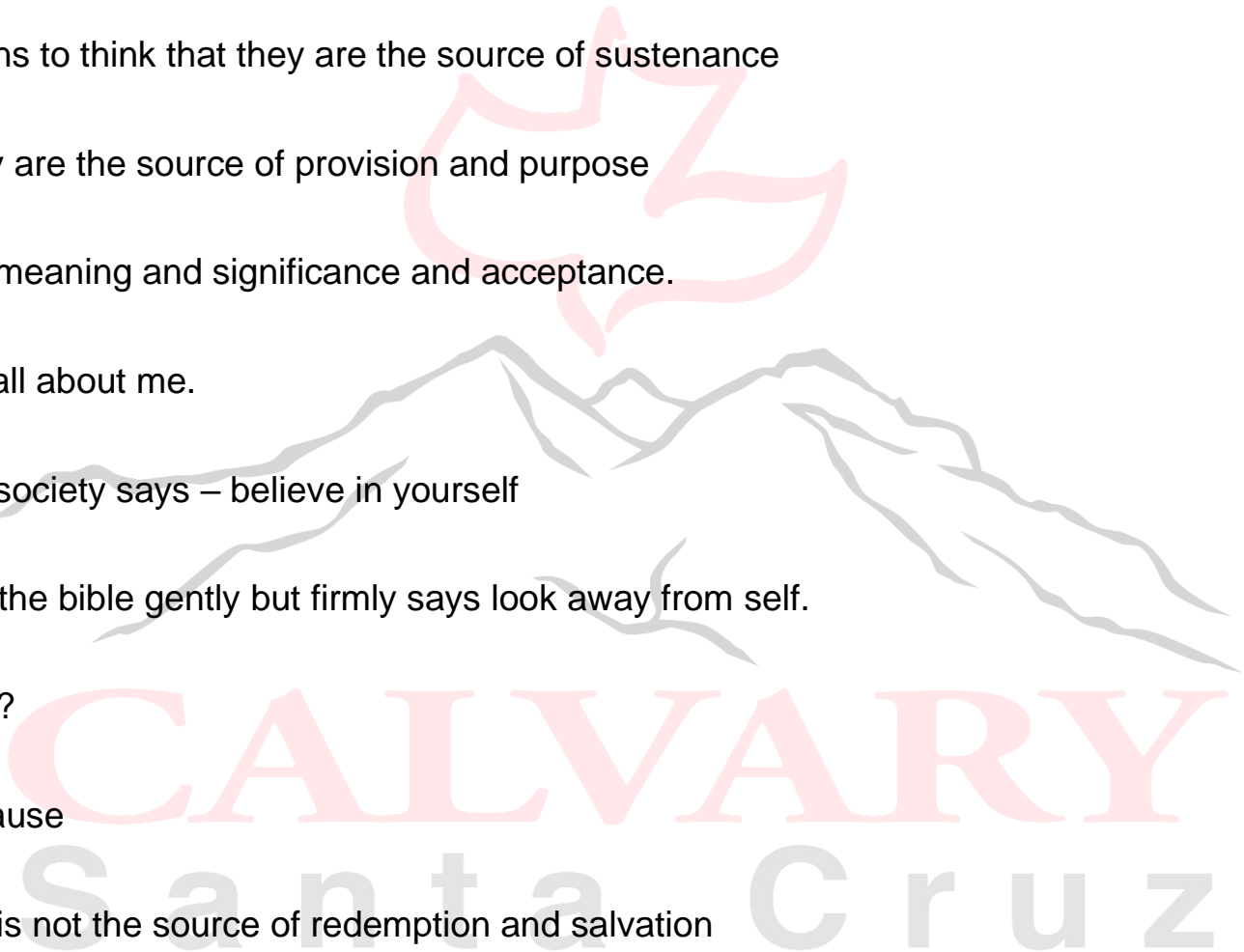
Because

Self is not the source of redemption and salvation

Self is not the source of acceptance

And we find this throughout scripture.

Paul later on in the book of Romans –



Write it down.

[Rom 12:16 NKJV] 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

In other words – Paul is saying, “Don’t think more highly of yourself – associate with people who are humble”

[Pro 3:7 NKJV] 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

Again – don’t think more highly of yourself

Don’t lean on your own understanding –

So – why is it so difficult to believe a person is saved by grace alone through faith alone???

Because in our culture and society – we are conditioned to play down the notion of sin.

We don’t even like to call it sin -

We are conditioned to play down

The problem of sin

We are conditioned to play down

The severity of sin

How sin affects our fellowship with God

How God views sin

Paul knew the heartbreaking reality of the danger of sin and the consequences of sin

But in our fallen nature and in our pride – we can't bring ourselves to think that we are bad.

We are prone to think that our goodness or our acts of righteousness must be able to make some meaningful contribution to the cost of salvation.

If I serve in church –

If I help the homeless,

If I try to do good,

God is going to count it as extra credit toward salvation.

But Paul reminds us that this is not the case.

Because of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ –

God alone gets all the glory.

We cannot accept the glory for our righteous standing because the glory belongs exclusively to God.

The more we understand the actual process of salvation, the more we realize that we've got nothing to boast about.

We didn't do anything worth boasting about, in regards, to our salvation.

We were the rebels.

We were the sinners.

But God - loved us.

God sent His Son to die.

So Paul contrasts the law of works and the law of faith

We aren't saved by doing good works or by keeping the Law of Moses.

We are saved by a different law, the "law of faith".

And the law of faith goes like this: You believe, you are saved.

There's nothing for us to boast about.

All the work was done by God, not by us.

One of the things that I have always encouraged all believers is that we need to be able to give our personal testimony.

And the reason is that sometimes you will hear someone give their testimony and they will talk about all the things that they gave up for Christ.

I gave up partying

I gave up drugs

I gave up golf

We need to be clear to realize that the act of giving something up doesn't do anything for our salvation.

Our salvation isn't based on what we give up, it's based on the trust we have in the blood of Jesus, that we are trusting that God did all the work necessary for our salvation.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Right standing with God ("justification") is not something that we earn by doing good works.

Rather, it is something that we receive as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ and His shed blood.

Paul had already made this point – in our text last Sunday – look at verse 24 again

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

Paul is making it very clear that there are no degrees of justification

We are either justified or we are not justified

There is no such thing as kinda justified

And Paul wants all of us to grasp that justification is something that God does

No human could ever do it

No sinner can justify himself or herself before God

For the believer – God has declared us righteous.

He opens up our records -

Every sin we have done in the past, present and future –

God writes one word – Jesus

He writes the name Jesus in the place of our sinfulness

And nobody can change the record.

Nobody.

And old dead guy once wrote –

God doesn't justify us because we are worthy – but by justifying us, He makes us worthy.

And so – every person who tries to find justification, apart from Christ –

It will never happen

It can never happen – because there is no satisfying solution to the problem of sin apart from Christ.

29 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 and the uncircumcised through faith.

Once again, Paul expects pushback from some of the Jewish readers.

Their argument will be that they were recipients of God's law.

They are His chosen people, they received His revelation.

So Paul reminds them that righteousness doesn't arise from the giving of the law but rather it reveals a sinful condition that is shared by both Jew and Gentile.

There is only one way of justifying sinful human beings

There is not a Jewish way and a Gentile way

Paul writes that we are all in the same boat.

Paul reminds them and us that we are all equally lost

And we can all be equally found – in Christ

For the Jew who insists that you must be keep the law in order to be saved, in order to be justified, in order to be accepted, in order to be redeemed – Paul argues – if that is the case, then what about the Gentiles – who did not receive the law.

Because the Jew who argues that the law saves – will have to conclude that there must be another way of salvation for the Gentiles.

And here is the point that Paul is making –

The scriptures throughout the Old Testament continue to point out that God is the God of the Jew and the Gentile

And here is the thing – the Jews knew it.

[Jer 10:7 NKJV] 7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise [men] of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, [There is] none like You.

King Solomon – at the dedication of the temple – in his prayer –

[1Ki 8:41-43 NKJV] 41 "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who [is] not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake 42 "(for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, 43 "hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as [do] Your people

Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

Solomon understood that Yahweh was not just the “god” of the Jews, but the God who made and rules the universe.

Turn to Mark 12

[Mar 12:29-32 NKJV] 29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments [is]: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 ‘And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This [is] the first commandment. 31 “And the second, like [it, is] this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” 32 So the scribe said to Him, “Well [said], Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.

If there is one God – then there is only one satisfying solution to the problem of sin – not two.

Both the circumcised and the uncircumcised (Jew and Gentile) are justified by faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)

The bible says that apart from Christ – there is no satisfying solution to the problem of sin.

God demands faith

Circumcision doesn't give us special favor

Revelation and Religion doesn't give us special favor

Ignorance and isolation doesn't give us special favor

Everyone has to come by faith

By believing

And believing means wrapping our arms around this Jesus and not letting go.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

When we exercise biblical faith -

Does justification by faith void the law of Moses

That is the question that Paul is asking –

And the response – no

We don't void the law – we establish it.

In what way?

Not by keeping the law – because we are no longer under the law.

We establish it through the fulfilling of the law in Christ.

Remember, the law declares that God is righteous and holy

The law says that God requires righteousness and holiness

The law also reveals that everyone breaks the law – it is only able to tell us that we are sinners.

What the purpose of the law?

To lead us to Jesus – so that we can be saved by faith.

Turn to Galatians 3

[Gal 3:23-26 NKJV] 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor [to bring us] to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

If God has done everything and we have done nothing –

We don't have anything to boast about

For the person who insists that they are good or that they have done enough to merit salvation – they neither understand the nature of God or the problem of sin.

The law of Moses was powerless against pride

Before the road to Damascus – Saul boasted about how much he kept the law

The Pharisees bragged about how much they kept the law

But when we grasp that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone – our response to God's grace – it will not be motivated by pride – but by love.

All we can say we can say is thank you and then we live our lives responding to so great a salvation

Amen

Let's pray...

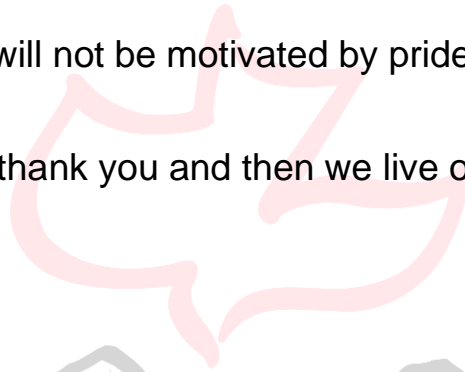
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

For the believer -

We don't stop doing things that we used to do because we are hoping that God will accept us.

We stop doing things because God has accepted us

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'