

Romans

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Romans 3:27-31



Vss. 27-28

- Paul here brings down the hammer. The way to God, the only true and real hope for humanity, cannot be found in human accomplishment. We can meditate sitting in the lotus position until we are unconscious from hunger; we can be as “good” as we humanly can; we can do all things that people the world over do and it will accomplish nothing. When we have exhausted all that we can do, we are still sinners, still caught in a web of our own making, still dead. The Way is the way of surrender and faith. Boasting, claiming some sense of moral/spiritual accomplishment, of actually doing anything of eternal meaning, of somehow being righteous, is out of the question. It is God alone who is good. It is God alone who gives meaning and value. It is God alone who is righteous and He alone can impart righteousness.
- As long as people try to hold on to some secular sense of worth and value, hold on to the idea that THEY are the masters of their lives, hold on to some sense of personal security, they are dead. It is ONLY by surrendering all of that and look to God for worth and value, for security, only by surrendering all sense of self-determination for God’s complete lordship over your life can one be saved. Says Stuart Briscoe, “Gratitude, not boasting, is the language of the redeemed”.

Vss. 29-30

- God is one. This is a concept the Jews knew very well. It is the opening of The Shema which they recited every day. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God", (Deuteronomy 6:4). God is God of all, Jew and Gentile alike. “The earth is the Lord’s and **all** it contains, the world and those who dwell in it” (Psalm 24:1).
- Whether circumcised or uncircumcised, Jew or Gentile, we come to God by faith alone. Indeed, God can only be known as He reveals Himself through our faith. All people everywhere have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So it is incumbent on all of humanity, the whole world that God so loved and for whom Christ died, to surrender and by faith be saved. As Barth

says, "In the righteousness of God, which is known only by **faith**, is the reality and life and personality of the one Creator and Redeemer".

Vs. 31

- If faith is just another way to God, a new way that replaces the Law, then Yes, faith does nullify the Law. But this is not what the Word says. The Law is not nullified. No, says Paul, we establish the Law. How? Because Christ is not set side by side with Moses, but rather we place Moses inside Christ. The Law, as it stood alone, could not save and in truth, made little sense because it could not be met and could never work. But place the Law, by faith, into the Love of Christ, and it take on an entirely new luster. As Barclay says, "Now a man must try to be good and keep God's law, not because he fears God's punishment, but because he feels that he must strive to deserve that amazing love. He strives for goodness, not because he is afraid of God, but because he loves Him. He knows now that sin is not so much breaking God's law as it is breaking God's heart, and, therefore, it is doubly terrible".
- It is love, not fear that motivates us to keep God's law. It is out of love, not fear, that we honor our father and our mother. We do not steal because we know such will break the heart of God and because the one who we would steal from is our neighbor whom we are to love. We do not break the law because breaking the law breaks the heart of God and because of our love for Him we would never want to break His heart. We do not break the Law because to do invariably means some kind of violence against our brother or our sister, God's own children, so that as we wound them, we are wounding God.
- Finally, as we lay the Law inside our love relationship with Christ, we are able to keep the Law where previously it could not be kept because the Father has poured out His Spirit upon us. When the lawyer asked Jesus what the greatest aspect of the law was in Luke 10, Jesus asked what he thought the Law said. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself", quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. "But who is my neighbor?", asked the lawyer. In response, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan. On their own, Jews and Samaritans hated each other, but now that we are in Christ and live in the power of His Spirit, we are able to love even those who hate us, love the unlovable, love those who the world demands that we hate. We are able to keep the Law only by the power of the Spirit.