

Romans 3:27-31

3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

Since salvation is only possible through the Lord Jesus Christ, boasting is excluded. Nobody can boast or brag on themselves because nothing they did made them reconciled to God, nothing they did made peace with God, nothing they did got them the Holy Ghost and the new birth, and nothing they did gave them an entrance to the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine when we are up in heaven, when Revelation 5 takes place, the church of God is up there in their resurrected glorified bodies along with the Old Testament saints. We start to sing, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us to God by his blood. But some don't sing that song because they are up there based upon their own works. Does that make sense? Of course not. Both Old and New Testament saints praise Jesus Christ and his shed blood because that is the only reason why they are there. Salvation is by faith, if it were of works, people could brag on themselves in God's presence and the book is clear that NO FLESH SHALL GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE (1 Corinthians 1:29). But we sure can glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)!

If a man was justified by his own works, and declared righteous on his own merits, than he can glory in himself and praise his own name. But the fact of the matter is none of us can save ourselves (Job 40:6-14). Look at that verse in Job: just as no man can do those things, so no can be saved by his own right hand. If the Bible says there is not a just man upon the earth that does good and doesn't sin, that applies to all people in every age (Ecclesiastes 7:20), even Old Testament saints.

In Matthew 19:16-26, someone asked Jesus what they must *do* to receive eternal life. What was our Lord's response? If you want to enter into [eternal] life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS. Now isn't that something? Talk about a contradiction in your Bible, there is on right there! But we can't stop there, we need to keep reading. The man than asks Jesus what commandments he needs to keep. He then quotes a few commandments from the law. The man says I have kept all these from a child (which is hard to believe). So Jesus says okay, how about giving to the poor and you'll be rewarded for it in heaven and come and follow me. The man goes away sorrowful because he had great possessions. Guess what? The man just found out he hasn't kept the whole law. He lusted after material things and would not give them up. He chose mammon over God. He broke the first commandment, thou shalt have none other gods before me. The Lord goes on to say how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God.

Now pay attention. The Apostles ask the Lord in Matthew 19:25, Who then can be saved? Great question isn't it? The Lord's response? **With men this is impossible.** Men cannot save themselves – it is impossible. With men salvation is impossible. With men, escaping the wrath of God is impossible. With men, making peace with God is impossible. With men, getting to heaven is impossible. With men eternal life is impossible; **BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!** Salvation is possible with God!

It is by the law of faith a man is justified before God and this makes plenty of sense. It was unbelief that damned us and it is belief that saves us. It was unbelief that brought death and it was belief that brought

everlasting life. It was unbelief that made us sinners, it is belief that made us righteous. It was unbelief in what God said about a tree that killed us and separated us from God, it is belief in what God said about a tree on Calvary that saves us and reconciles us back to God. Our faith in Jesus Christ is what brings us back to God.

3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

In the sight of God, a man can only be justified by faith without works. Notice I said, in the sight of God, you can only be justified by faith. But James says faith without works is dead. Which one is right? They both are right, the key to understanding these passages are their contexts.

Now we have been studying Romans 3 for awhile now, and the passage is clearly talking about justification before God and not men. It is dealing with a man's standing before God not his state. There is a difference between your standing and state. Your standing before God is saved, secured, righteous, sanctified, holy, justified, without spot or wrinkle, a son of God. Your state before God changes (examples: Lot, Israel and Balaam, Abraham) Sometimes you walk in the light sometimes you don't. Sometimes you are living right sometimes you are in sin. Your state may change; but your standing before God doesn't change. I might be making a lot of sales at work or making no sales at work, I'm still a salesman. I might be a good husband or I might be a bad husband, I'm still a husband. I may be a good son of my Father or a bad son of my father, but I'm still a son. Whatever state you are currently in doesn't affect your standing!

Now James 2 is not dealing with justification before God, but justification before men.

In James 2:1-13, he is addressing the sin of the people. They were having respect of persons (James 2:1) and they despised the poor (James 2:6). He exhorts them to fulfill the royal law of the Bible to love their neighbor as themselves (James 2:8). He goes on to say put your walk where your mouth is (James 2:12). Don't just say we ought to love one another, do it! Don't just say don't be a respecter of persons, don't be a respecter of persons! Don't just say don't lie, don't lie! Don't just say we need to preach the gospel, preach the gospel! Don't just say put God first, put God first! That's what he is saying in 2:12 which is exactly what Paul said in Romans 2:21-24. It's no good if you are saying one thing and doing another, but it sure is a good thing and acceptable to God when you say one thing and do that one thing.

James 2 versus Romans 3

So James goes on to say, WHAT PROFIT IS THERE if a man says he has faith and doesn't have works, can faith save him (James 2:14)? Let's answer the first question.

Question 1: What profit is there if you say you have faith and no works?

Answer: There is no profit. What good does it do? It does no good. Read Jeremiah 5:1-5, Titus 1:16. They swear the LORD lives but they don't live according to that knowledge nor walk in his ways. What good does that do? It makes you wonder if they really believe the LORD lives.

How many times have you and I run into professing Christians that claim the LORD liveth, but live as if the LORD doesn't live? How many times have you run into a professing Christian that claims he is saved

but has no desire to read the word of God, no desire to pray, no desire to go to church, no desire to fellowship with the saints, no desire to live for Jesus Christ, no desire to be holy, clean, sanctified, and righteous. Instead they live in the lusts of their own hearts after the manner of the Gentiles which know not God. They live in sin and given the chance, they will justify the wicked world instead of God's holy word! There are many like that aren't there? What profit is there in that? There is no profit because their walk doesn't match their profession of faith and it causes all those around them to doubt whether they have faith or not.

Question 2: Can faith save him?

Save him from what? Is James talking about being saved from death, hell, sin, or the grave?

The scripture is clear that faith in Jesus Christ without works is what saves the soul (1 Peter 1:9, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 John 5:4-5, John 3:16, Romans 10:9-13, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Romans 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 1:21-24, Acts 15:11, Acts 16:31, etc). So when we read one verse in the Bible that seems to suggest faith alone can't save you, when every other verse says faith alone saves you, we are probably misinterpreting that one verse that seems to teach otherwise.

James 2:15-16

Again, he says if you see someone in need and you tell them to depart in peace and pray and bless them that they might get what they need, and you don't help them, what does it profit?

James 2:17

He says faith without works is dead. I would whole heartedly agree. You can't have one without the other. But you are not saved by faith + works, or by works, you are saved when you trust Jesus Christ. But now since you have trusted Jesus Christ, by the normal and natural consequence of salvation, you are created unto good works and are to walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

- God has put in you the desire and the ability to perform those good works (Philippians 2:12-13).
- You can know someone has been saved by the effect the Spirit of God has on their life (John 3:3-8). How do you know when there is wind? You cannot see the wind, but we all know if there is wind. How do we know this? By observing the effect it has on the trees, grass, our hair, etc. How can you tell if someone has been born again? By how their lives have been changed from the inside out.
- You mind spiritual things (Romans 8:1-5)
- The Spirit bears witness with your spirit (Romans 8:8-9, 14-16)
- You know the Spirit (John 14:17), he teaches you and brings God's word to your remembrance (John 14:26)
- The Spirit testifies of Jesus (John 15:26)
- The fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25)

Now granted, all Christians can quench and grieve the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19) but the fact remains, when you got saved, OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY AND ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW.

James 2:18

Again, James is talking about proving your faith in the sight of men not in the sight of God. A man says he has faith and works. Amen, praise God, Hallelujah! How are you going to prove you have faith? The only way you can prove you have faith in the sight of men is by your works. If a man doesn't have works but claims to have faith, everyone wonders if this man really has faith. But if a man claims to have faith, and his life is full of works, men conclude the person has faith.

James 2:19-20

Believing there is one God (intellectual) is good, but even the devils got that right and they are not saved. Reciting the "Apostle's Creed" (intellectual) won't do you any good, but believing ON the Lord Jesus Christ will save your soul.

What does it mean to believe on Jesus Christ?

We find the phrase "believe in" and "believe on" Jesus Christ throughout the Scriptures. The exhortation to believe on Christ is found more than to believe in Christ. Maybe I'm straining a gnat but "believing in" seems to denote that you trust in something to be so, you acknowledge something to be true. "Believing on" seems to denote you are trusting in that something and nothing else.

If a man cries out to the Lord for mercy, by doing so he is acknowledging that by his own deeds he should be executed for the sin he committed. He knows he is worthy of death and God is just in killing him. He has no hope with God if God is to judge him according to his works. When he trusts Jesus Christ, he is putting all of his eggs in one basket so to speak. He is saying, I am staking my soul on Jesus Christ, and in nothing else to save me. He is saying my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. He is saying I am without hope, unless God has mercy on me through Christ.

Believing on Christ does not mean, I believe Christ died for my sins and rose again and that if I am good enough I can make peace with God and get to heaven. This person has not believed on Jesus Christ and has not submitted to the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3). He is still trusting in himself. A man must abandon his own righteousness and his own works, if he desires to be saved by Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5).

When a man says he must have faith in Jesus Christ and works to be saved, what he is actually saying is that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and his faith and his righteousness **IS NOT ENOUGH** to save me, I must also do something in order to be saved. That is not the Jesus of the word of God. That is what's called another Jesus, another gospel, and another spirit (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). The Jesus of the Bible was without sin (Hebrews 4:14-15), fulfilled the law for us (Romans 10:4) and God justifies us by our faith in Christ alone (Romans 3:24-26, 4:3-5).

The Bible says we can know for sure we have eternal life (1 John 5:12-13). Some say, nobody can know for sure. If you are trusting in your own righteousness YOU WILL NEVER KNOW FOR SURE! You may not have done enough; you might not have prayed enough; you may have sinned too much, etc. BUT if you are trusting in Jesus Christ you can know for sure because he has given you his righteousness! It's not based about what you do it's based upon what HE DID! That's what it means to believe on and trust Jesus Christ.

James 2:20

He restates that faith without works is dead.

James 2:21-25 and Romans 4:2

They refer to two different parts in Abraham's life. When God told him he would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, he believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Then when Abraham offered up Isaac, it says he was justified by works. But notice what was made perfect? His *faith* was made perfect by works not *he* was made perfect by works.

Again, the whole of James 2 is dealing with justification before men. That is the point of this chapter. Works manifest that you have faith. If Abraham didn't believe God's promise, he would not have offered up Isaac. He believed God would raise him from the dead (Genesis 22:5, Hebrews 11:17-19). If Rahab didn't believe she would be saved, she would not have hid the spies and sent them out a different way.

By works a man is justified [in the sight of men] and not just by faith only. Again this chapter is dealing with people that are saying one thing and doing another. If there are no works with your faith, your faith is dead.

3:29-31 *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

Before he was the God of the Jews, he was the God of all the earth. God chose Israel to be his peculiar people out of all the nations of the earth and he chose them to bring about the promised Seed. Praise God he is the God of Jews and Gentiles! How does God justify the Jew? By faith! How does God justify the Gentile? Through faith! It is by faith you are found just before God, and specifically faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as the law doesn't disannul faith, so does faith not disannul the law. It actually establishes the law.