

Why Spiritual Boasting is Excluded for the Believer

Romans 3:27-31

The Bible is both deeply theological and eminently practical. There is always a word for the student, as well as a fresh word for the sinner. Our text brings one of the finest theological discussions on justification to a practical and important closure. Paul has just said in chapter 3:

- (1). Our sin brings injury to the glory of God, in that when we sin we exchange God's glory for our pleasure (vs. 23, 25).
- (2). God has set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation (mercy covering) for us (v. 25).
- (3). The redemption that is in Christ Jesus has completely paid for the guilt of our sin (v. 24).
- (4). God is therefore righteous when He justifies sinners – in that He punishes the sinner's sin in His Son and then declares the sinner completely righteous on the basis of the work of Christ.

It is for this reason that Paul tells us that there is no room in the believer for spiritual boasting.

I. You had absolutely nothing to do with your salvation.

Why does Paul raise the issue of boasting? Simply because pride is the greatest problem of the human race, and the sin which God most abhors. Self-exaltation, self-admiration, and self-determination are those things that compete with the glory of God. Boasting is something that God must rid his people of or he loses his glory in their lives.

When the Apostle Paul says boasting is excluded the word he uses 'excluded' gives the picture of a door that is locked with the inability to open it because the key has been lost. This brings to mind imagery that a Christian may seek to open the door for possible boasting in his life, but God will have nothing to do with it.

II. You have absolutely nothing to do with your sanctification.

It is easy for a Christian to say to himself, "God declares me justified; therefore I cannot boast in my justification. But I am the one who sanctifies myself. Therefore I can take pride in where I am at spiritually." The only problem with that kind of thinking is we forget that sanctification is part of the salvation process.

(A). You can't boast about your church... *"the God of the Jews only?"* (v. 29).

(B). You can't boast about your commitment... *"God of the Gentiles also"* (v. 29).

(C). You can't boast about your consecration... *"it is God which justifies"* (v. 30).

III. You had absolutely nothing to do with your satisfaction.

If there is a tremendous amount of joy within your heart as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to recognize that not all people will have that same kind of joy. It is for this reason that you cannot condemn a person who is not where you are spiritually. God gives different measures of grace and he is working according to his timetable in others.

The law, which binds us to the Lord Jesus Christ, is the law of faith: faith in His person, faith in His work, faith in His merits, faith in His performance, faith in His love. The greatest assistance you could ever be to a person struggling in his walk with Christ is to teach him how, by faith, to lay hold of the work of Jesus Christ.

"All the sin of heathendom, all the sin of Christendom, is but the outgrowth of one root – God dethroned, self enthroned in the heart of man." – Andrew Murray

“Salvation is of the Lord.” – Jonah 2:9

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Salvation is the work of God. It is He alone who quickens the soul “dead in trespasses and sins,” and it is He also who maintains the soul in its spiritual life. He is both “Alpha and Omega.” “Salvation is of the Lord.” If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful; if I have graces, they are God’s gifts to me; if I hold on in a consistent life, it is because He upholds me with His hand. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation, except what God Himself first does in me. Whatever I have, all my goodness is of the Lord alone. Wherein I sin, that is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely. If I have repulsed a spiritual enemy, the Lord’s strength nerved my arm. Do I live before men a consecrated life? It is not I, but Christ who liveth in me. Am I sanctified? I did not cleanse myself: God’s Holy Spirit sanctifies me. Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by *God’s* chastisements sanctified to my good. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me. All my jewels were fashioned by heavenly art. I find in God all that I want; but I find in myself nothing but sin and misery. “He only is my rock and my salvation.” Do I feed on the Word? That Word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul, and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna but Jesus Christ himself incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink. Am I continually receiving fresh increase of strength? Where do I gather my might? My help cometh from heaven’s hills: without Jesus I can do nothing. As a branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can I, except I abide in Him. What Jonah learned in the great deep, let me learn this morning in my closet: “Salvation is of the Lord.”

- C. H. Spurgeon