

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 3:26(B)

“... He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

- **The Path and the Means of our Justification**

Three times in the passage before us Paul emphasizes the necessity of faith:

- **Verse 22:** “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” **Verse 25:** “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.” **Verse 26:** “He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

Faith, then, becomes the path to our justification – **but it is not the “means” by which we are justified.**

- **Wrong:** “For it is by faith you have been saved, through grace --and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”.
- **Right:** “For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith --and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”.

There is an ever-present danger that we will regard faith as the means of our salvation – instead of grace.

The Protestant Reformation: “Justification by faith alone” – “Sola Fide”: Luther had an instinct that “faith alone” had to be the

center of Reformational teaching – or his followers would quickly revert to what they had been originally taught – that works were the path to salvation.

The means of our justification is, and always will be, grace “through faith”. See: Acts 18:27; Romans 4:16; Romans 11:5; Ephesians 2:5

- **Faith Is Non-Meritorious**

Sometimes it is easier to define what something does not do – as well as what it does. When it comes to grace and faith Paul makes it clear that faith is non-meritorious.

We affirm that faith – on its own – is not the grounds of our salvation. We are saved by grace ... through faith.

In the New Covenant faith does not act as a substitute for works. We cannot say, “Well, they had works, but we have faith.” The would be substituting New Testament faith for Old Testament works.

God did the propitiating and God provided the sacrifice of propitiation: “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.” Romans 3:25

Faith must be in Christ's work on the Cross –not faith in our faith. Salvation does not take place when God provides Christ's Cross – and we contribute faith – so we can complete the new contract.

R.W. Stott: “The value of faith is not to be found in itself, but entirely and exclusively in its object, namely Jesus Christ.”

The audacity of Christianity: Christ offers humans a free

forgiveness and a new life to those who have done nothing to deserve it.

- **Grace Versus Self-Salvation**

“God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood ... He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

God's actions in presenting Christ as a propitiation demonstrate His faithfulness to “Justify those who have faith in Jesus”. Note where the faith is – it's in Jesus. It's in Jesus' alone.

Every other system – whether religious or secular hinges on some form of self-salvation through good works, moral accomplishment, or philanthropy.

At its core, New Testament Christianity cannot be likened to any religion or self-salvation system. We attribute our salvation to God's grace, expressed in His sacrifice of His own Son.

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” -- 1Peter 2:24

- **Emil Brunner: “ascent” and “descent”.**

“Ascent” -- humans try to move towards God through systems of belief and – of course – works.

“Descent” -- God sent His Son to die for us. He lived our life, died our death, took our judgment, and ascended to the Father.”

See: John 1:4; 14:6