

# Romans 3:27-31

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[ 0 : 00 ] Do be seated. Turn if you will to Romans 3. And as John prayed, James Buchanan, our minister in Lys, is going to be preaching tonight. He's going to do three Sunday nights for us on the book of Proverbs, which will be really great. And so do come this evening to your James Buchanan preach.

So we're at the end of Romans 3. We're going there. And we're looking at verses 27 to 31 this morning. Romans chapter 3 verses 27 to 31. And I think the question is where to ask are two. The first question is this. Are you in the grip of grace? Or are you in the grip of pride? Are you in the grip of pride? Or are you in the grip of grace? And there's really nothing in between. The apostle has been explaining to us the good news of the gospel.

And one of the tests, I think, to answer those questions, am I in the grip of pride? Or am I in the grip of grace? Is to listen to yourself. To listen to the things that you boast about. What's on your brag sheet?

And one of the kinds of things you're proud of. Our reputation. Our good name. The respect of our colleagues. Our promotion. Our popularity. Our education. Our family. Our well-behaved children. Our appearance. Our good looks. Our slightly dignified, greying beard. Our honour. Our character. Our humility. Our superiority. Our successes. Our activities.

[ 1 : 46 ] Our service. Our service. Our service. Our service. Our service. Our service. So a cartoon of Garfield. You know Garfield the cat? And Garfield was talking to his dog, Oddie. It's Oddie, isn't it? And Garfield says, I'm tired of talking about me. You talk about me for a while.

And so often cartoons are really insightful, aren't they? To the nature of life and the way that we think. The way we act. And when we're in the grip of pride. We'll boast. We'll be far more subtle than children are about it.

But in subtle ways. Maybe in open ways. And we're often blind to it, aren't we? Our own faults and our own failings. We'll be often full of ingratitude when we're gripped by pride.

Anger. Often angry. Angry with people. Angry with life. Angry with God. Often impatient. Often impatient. Often stubborn. Opinionated.

Crippled sometimes by a desire to please other people. Crippled by a fear of other people. Devastated by criticism.

[ 3 : 00 ] Find it hard to listen. Defensive. And underneath all of that. Let me tell you it's pride. And it's a very serious global epidemic.

Pandemic. That's worked its way through our lives. And it's a root sin. It's a root sin. Pride.

Pride. Flows all the way from the devil. And it flows from the lies that he spreads. And we suffer from that. And we suffer from that. And you can look carefully yourself.

Today and see. Are you in the grip of pride? And as Paul explains the good news of God. And as he works through this good news of how we are declared right with God.

And put into the right with God. By faith in Jesus Christ. And resting. Completely on the life. And the work. And the merit. Of someone else. Totally. Attirely.

[ 4 : 01 ] Entirely. Apart from ourselves. Paul says. Can you see what he says? Verse 27. It destroys boasting. It destroys boasting.

It absolutely flattens it. It eradicates it. It gives no ground to boasting. It's devastated by the gospel. And so what happens when we are caught and gripped by grace?

That's what this passage teaches us. Well our boasting changes. And we stop boasting on ourselves. You know those great verses from Jeremiah 29.

Verse 23 and 24. He says this. Jeremiah says. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches.

But let him who boasts. Boasts in this. That he understands and knows me. That I am the Lord. Psalm 34 verse 2 says. My soul makes its boast in the Lord.

[ 5 : 04 ] So let the humble hear and be glad. Or we could go to Corinthians. And there's several references. In Corinthians. About boasting in the Lord. Boasting in Jesus Christ. Boasting in the grace of God.

The kindness of God. That comes to me through the Lord Jesus. And so somebody who is in the grip of grace. Will boast about grace. They will boast about God. And they will boast about Jesus Christ.

And the life of Jesus Christ. And the death of Jesus Christ. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so when you are in the grip of grace.

You will boast about someone. Other than yourself. When you are in the grip of grace. You will boast about Jesus. And when you are in the grip of pride.

You are always struggling. Always in every direction. To just get a foothold. To boast about yourself.

[ 6 : 04 ] We don't like to use that language. Do we? But to exalt ourselves. To draw that little bit of attention. Back into ourselves. To find something about yourself. So think about it.

Whose group are you in today? The grip of pride. Or the grip of grace. Look at verse 27. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law?

By the law of works? No. But by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified. By faith. Apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of the Jews only?

Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes. Of Gentiles also. Since God is one. That's an astonishing statement. Who will justify the circumcised by faith. And the uncircumcised through faith.

Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? Well by no means. On the contrary we uphold it. Paul shows you and I. What the gospel of the Lord Jesus does. And it does three things. First of all it demolishes all boasting itself.

[ 7 : 07 ] And secondly it draws us to the wider fact. It widens the angle. And it tells us that God is one. And you scratch your head thinking. Where did that come from Paul?

And then thirdly it establishes the law. So first of all let's see the good news about Jesus. Is demolishes all boasting in ourselves. That's the whole point.

You are justified. Can you see it? In verse 27. Apart from the works of the law. You are declared in the right with God. Because you trust in Jesus.

And it's not what you do that counts in the sight of God. All our boasting is excluded. And so what does he mean when he speaks here. Of our boasting. And that our pride is demolished.

Well in the context of Romans. Can you think back over these weeks. That we've looked at it since the start of the year. We've seen over and over again. And we that pride is one of the biggest human problems.

[ 8 : 09 ] It's one of the great problems that humanity faces. And it's pride that comes out when we boast. So what is boasting?

It's pride that just comes tumbling out. That's all it is. And so words of self-congratulation. Words of self-admiration. Words tumbling out of self-praise.

Words of self-congratulation. Words of self-congratulation. So little Jack Horner. Sat in a corner. Eating his. Christmas pie isn't it? He put in his.

Thumb. And pulled out a. Plum. And said what a good boy am I isn't it? I've not mangled. You know the nursery guy. But it is. It's an illustration isn't it? Of pride. Little Jack Horner.

This little boy. Who sits there. What a good boy am I? That's what people think Christianity is.

That's what they think we're saying to ourselves this morning don't they? It's the exact opposite.

[ 9 : 08 ] And pride grows and grows and comes tumbling out. Words of self-admiration. Words of self-praise. And yet Paul throughout Romans up to now has brutally exposed that.

So come with me to chapter 1 and verse 18. Chapter 1 and verse 18 says the wrath of God. Pride leads us to push down God's truth.

It's like a ball in a swimming pool. You know when you could go. I think you can go swimming can't you? And you sit on a ball. You love that isn't it? And you go. The ball is under you.

And we push it down and we push it down. And then sometimes it just pops up. That's what we do with God's truth. We hold it down. We think we're above it. We think we're greater than it. We think we know better than God.

And so we take God's truth and we hold it underwater. We stand on it. We suppress it. We deny it. It's the nature of pride. A couple of verses later.

[10:13] Look at chapter 1 and verses 22 to 23. He makes it clear. That we think that we're wise. But in actual fact we're fools. Why?

Because we exchange the glory of the never dying God. For images of men and birds and animals and reptiles. We worship the created things rather than the creator.

And we think that we can work out a better way to worship God than the way God says. And so we forget about the glory of God. And so we make this dark exchange.

Do you remember it? This dark exchange which exchanges the truth of God for a lie. And at its root is pride.

We know best. You go down a little further. Chapter 1 verses 25. And it says we exchange the truth about God for a lie. And worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.

[11:13] A little bit later in verse 28. Chapter 1. He says they did not see fit to acknowledge God. And so God gave them up. We just refuse to acknowledge God.

We look at all the evidence and say no, no, no. So Paul has exposed this again and again and again.

And he goes on to apply it, doesn't he? To Jews. To those who had God's word. And to those who didn't have God's word. And he says we're all guilty of it. Some of you will have read C.S. Lewis on pride.

He calls it the great sin. Boasting is just pride tumbling out of your mouth. And Lewis says you've come to the center of the essential vice.

The utmost evil is pride. So chastity, adultery, anger, greed, drunkenness. They are mere flea bites in comparison.

[12:16] Because it's through pride that the devil became the devil. And pride leads to every other vice. It's through pride Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden.

And that's what Lewis teaches us. That every other sin is just a flea bite. It's a symptom. In comparison to our pride and boasting. And when we start to understand the good news of the Lord Jesus.

When we start to listen to what the Lord Jesus has done. Do you remember Paul broke it down last week. And he tells us that justification of being declared righteous by God.

Of being ransomed. Because Jesus has paid the price to redeem us on the slave market. And he has become the propitiation. He has been the sacrifice which turns away the anger of God.

And our sinful minds. We start to listen to that good news. That there is a way back to God. And we try to find a way to get away from it. And we try to find some credit for ourselves.

[13:26] Because that's what pride does. Pride works in our consciences. In a way that we have to get credit for stuff. And when you are in the grip of pride.

You will want to get credit for anything and everything. You see we carry pride around with us. Even when we believe the gospel. Even when we've understood what it means to be declared righteous. And have that ransom price paid for us. And to be sitting under that propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet we think don't we?

We can get credit. Because we helped a stranger. We fed a beggar on the street. We endured suffering. We helped an orphan. We read our Bibles for five minutes this morning.

Or for 20 minutes this morning. We prayed. We prayed all day. Without ceasing. And we fasted. And we come to church. And in actual fact we pay attention during the sermons.

[14:26] And we want to get credit for stuff. And God will be pleased with me because of that. And the subtle form of pride clings to us. And works its way out in our boasting.

Lord you know how I've prayed. Lord you know how I've served. You know how I've suffered. And Paul tells us really simply. And really straightforwardly.

That boasting in yourself is absolutely demolished. When you understand what grace really means. It's absolutely demolished. And so boasting in ourselves.

In our own disciplines. In our own attempts at godliness. Is only evidence that we've not really understood the grace of God. That's come to us in Jesus. And so that's what Paul is saying to us here in Romans 3.

The nature of this righteousness that is declared to be ours. When we know. That we have been unrighteous. And we have sinned against him.

[ 15 : 30 ] When we know that. The nature of that ransom price. That he gives his own blood. In order that we might be rescued. From that horrible slavery. The nature of that propitiation.

That he diverts. And takes upon himself. The wrath of God. Like a lightning rod. That attracts lightning to it. So it doesn't fall on us. And that is all to his credit.

And to his honor. And to his glory. And to his praise. And his exaltation. And so all our boasting in ourselves. Just looks silly.

It simply looks silly. When you grasp and understand. Understood all that he did for us. That you and I contributed. Absolutely nothing. I believe.

I know you did. That it was a gift. Of the grace of God. To you that believe. In Jesus Christ. And so boasting. Is permanently excluded.

[ 16 : 37 ] Because we live. By faith. Verse 27. How is it excluded? By works of the law. No by the law of faith. That's a difficult phrase.

To translate. But I think from the context. It's really obvious. It's saying that the whole law. Of God. Even as it was written. In the Old Testament. Was pointing to faith in another. It was pointing. The people who heard the law. On Sinai. To faith in another.

And to being completely. Satisfied. In standing in the finished work. Of someone else. The law was pointing to that. And it is a law of faith. And the Old Testament.

Men and women. Were called to believe. On the Lord Jesus Christ. And I think that's what he's going to tell us. In chapter 4. Abraham. He is somebody who lived. Under that law.

[ 17 : 34 ] But he is the friend of God. And the father of the faithful. He is the one. Who trusted. And believed God. That the law. That pointed him. To the Lord Jesus Christ. So there's a total demolition.

Of all boasting ourselves. Because the gospel. The good news. Of the Lord Jesus. Takes us to a place. Where we are wholly taken up. As someone else. And it forces us back.

To the question. Are you in the grip of pride. Or the grip of grace. The grip of pride. Everything you achieve. Everything that you look at.

On your brag sheet. Everything that you have. On that sheet. Has. Has written by it. You've received it. By the grace of God.

So you've been given promotion. That is God's grace. You've been given. Obedient children. That is by God's grace. Thank God for your education.

[ 18 : 39 ] It is by God's grace. You've been given a family. It is by God's grace. You've been given. A measure of prosperity. It is by God's grace. You're good looking. It's by God's grace. And so when we have.

Any honor. Or power. Or ability. The gifts. That you've been given. Is all by the grace of God. You have nothing. That you have not received. It is always.

By the grace of God. The Christian. Gives glory. To another. And boasting. Is demolished. When we know. What Jesus. Done for us. Now the second thing.

That he sets out here. Is that this good news. About Jesus Christ. Reminds us. That God is one. And I think. As you read. The end of chapter three. Initially. That's slightly odd.

It doesn't seem to fit. Why have you put that in there Paul? We wonder. Why is it there? Our boasting is demolished. We hold that. We're justified by faith.

[ 19 : 38 ] Apart from works of the law. Or is God. The God of the Jews only. Isn't he the God of the Gentiles? Yes. Since God is. One. Who will justify.

The circumcised by faith. And the uncircumcised through faith. There's no difference. In the meaning of those words. The by faith. And through faith there. Those words. Take you away from yourself. So what is he doing?

How has God revealed this? Well what he's done. Is not totally out of step. And out of sync. With this whole argument. In fact. It's completely in sync. He takes this great. Old Testament truth.

You could say. It's the greatest. Of all the Old Testament truths. It's so ingrained. In the Jewish consciousness. That when they got up. In the morning. They said.

Hear O Israel. The Lord our God. Is one Lord. It's from Deuteronomy 6. Deuteronomy 6. The words of the Shammai. It became the great call. To worship. Hear O Israel.

[ 20 : 37 ] The Lord our God. Is one Lord. It was the great. Theological fact. It's stated. With such precision. And we begin to understand.

Why has God put this. In here. There is one God. And God is one. And so Paul is explaining to you.

Isn't he. Think of the context of Romans. He's saying to you. There is only one way. For you to be right with God. And it doesn't matter who you are. Whether you're a Jew. Or whether you're a Gentile. The only one way. To be right with God. Is through the work of Jesus Christ. And so this declaring.

Righteous. This ransom. This propitiation. It is of faith. Faith. And that is the faith. Of the Old Testament. And that is the faith. Of the New Testament.

[ 21 : 33 ] This great. Theological truth. Proves it. Hear O Israel. The Lord our God. The Lord is one. Now.

The Hebrew. That great call to worship. It could mean. That he is. The only one. One. Or it could mean. That he is. One. That there's a unity.

To him. And I. I don't think we need to decide. Between them. Could mean both those things. That's what I want to say. And I think that's partly. How we do understand it. There is only one God. And he is one.

So as you look at the face. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you read of him. You're not looking at another God. You're looking at the true God. As he has revealed himself. And he is one.

And as the Holy Spirit. Is working in the lives. Of men and women. And boys and girls. He is not another God. There is one God. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit.

[ 22 : 29 ] And so Paul takes this. Huge. Theological truth. And he uses it. To enforce the gospel of grace. And he says. That totally excludes boasting. Let me quote to you.

From John Piper. He says. This statement. That there is only one true God. Is also a statement. That this God. Has a unity. And a coherence. To his identity.

It implies to us. That not all religions. Are true. And lead to heaven. And it also implies. That those who know. The true God. Through his gracious revelation.

Should try to persuade others. To trust the one true God. God. And it implies. That since the true God. Of the Bible. Is a God. Who is known by faith.

And not by violent coercion. No force. Will be used. To demand. Or restrict. Religious freedom. Let me. That's really practical. And really helpful.

[ 23 : 28 ] Because Paul is. Setting out here. He's saying. He's preaching. The gospel of grace. And his first line is. This totally wipes out. All boasting itself. And then his second line.

As he carries this through. Is a much deeper point. He takes the theological basic. And he says. Now because God is one. Therefore this message.

Is for the whole world. There's one message. For the whole world. Since this is true. There is only one God. And he is one. And there's only one way. Of salvation. And he says.

We must preach this gospel. And that's why. He takes this gospel. To Jews. And to Gentiles. He uses this huge.

Theological truth. And he puts it. Into practice. As Piper wrestles. With this truth. He says. Christianity. Is both a threat.

[ 24 : 24 ] And a support. For religious pluralism. Can you get that? It's a threat. For religious pluralism. But it's also support. It's a spiritual threat.

And a political support. Let me try and explain that. True Christianity. Will never support. Ethnic cleansing. True Christianity. Does not advance. By the sword. Or by the gun. How does true Christianity advance?

It comes through the proclamation. And persuasion. And prayer. And love. And by being persecuted. And not persecuted. And so he says. We must make both.

These things clear. First. I believe. That there is one true God. There is one true God. Who has revealed himself. In history. In the Lord Jesus Christ. It means that we do not count.

All religions equally. There is one God. And all other gods. Are false gods. And so Christianity. Is a missionary faith. Or it's false.

[ 25 : 22 ] To its foundations. And that foundation.

Is great. It's made known to us. In that one God. And his work in Jesus Christ. Who is one God. And that leads us.

Not only to examine ourselves. If we're gripped by pride. And not by grace. But it leads us. I think. And motivates us. To take this one message.

Out into all the world. And Piper says. It draws one other conclusion. He says. We must make it clear. That this is a loving thing. To plead for people.

To know and trust. The one and only living God. Through Jesus Christ. And the spread of Christianity. Must never be by violence.

[ 26 : 33 ] Or coercion. Because that would be self-defeating. Because no one is saved. Are they? By a faithful act. We spread the message. By proclamation.

And persuasion. And prayer. And love. And so I think. That gives us something. To think about this week. As the gospel. Is grounded. In the uniqueness. And unity of God.

It gives us something. That we stand upon. And understand. In this pluralistic world. In which we live. There is good news. About Jesus Christ. There's good news.

About Jesus Christ. Which eradicates. Our boasting. And makes us missionaries. Every one of us. Because God is one. And then the third. And final point. That I want to just deal with.

Really briefly. Is the Lord Jesus Christ. The good news of the Lord Jesus. Upholds the law. We'll see this more next week. So instead of saying. Jesus come. The Old Testament. Comes for nothing. Doesn't say that at all.

[ 27 : 33 ] He says. This establishes. The Old Testament principle. And it's always been the case. Men and women. Boys and girls. Are called to believe. In Jesus Christ. They were always called.

To believe in the coming saviour. How was Abraham saved? In exactly the same way you are. How was Isaiah saved? In exactly the same way you are.

Through faith. Faith in a promised saviour. Isaac Watts. Wrote these really powerful words. He says.

No more my God. I boast no more. Of all the duties I have done. I quit the hopes I held before. To trust the merits of thy son.

Now. For the love I bear his name. What was my gain. I count my loss. My former pride. I call my shame. And nail my glory. To his cross.

[ 28 : 30 ] The best obedience of my hands. Dares not appear before thy throne. But faith can answer thy demands. By pleading. What my Lord has done.

No more my God. No more my God. No more my God. I boast no more. And every believer. From Adam and Eve.

Forward. Came to that place. And sing like Isaac Watts. I boast no more. No more my God. I boast no more. Of all the duties I have done. I quit the hopes I held before.

To trust the merits of thy son. And this gospel of grace. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Upholds the law. We'll see that in chapter four. But we force ourselves.

To answer this question. Am I in the grip of grace. Or am I still gripped from pride. You know when you go to the airport.

[ 29 : 28 ] When you used to go to the airport. You'd go to the airport. And you would go through the place. Where you'd check your passport. And then you'd get to security. Do you remember that? And you'd queue there.

And then you'd get to the front. And you'd be handed a tray. And you'd put your tray down. And there'd be somebody. Barking instructions at you. They'd tell you to take your belt off.

They'd tell you to take your shoes off. And there'd be some people. That have those little.

Transparent plastic bags. And they'd prepare. And they'd put them all in neatly. Isn't there? But I'd never done that surprisingly. And you'd empty your pockets.

And you'd have change. That you throw in. And then. You'd open. Take your wallet out. And you'd have to put it all in. And then you'd go and stand in the queue. In your socks. And there's somebody next to you.

In a really posh suit. And there's somebody next to you. In a tracksuit. But all three of you. You had to put everything. That you had. Into the drawers. Didn't you? And you'd stand there.

[ 30 : 26 ] And then you'd walk through. And you'd beep, beep, beep, beep, beep. Because you'd forgotten. That you had a pen knife. Or something like that on you. And you'd have to go back. And put that in.

Because nobody was allowed through. Unless you emptied. All your valuables. And put them in. And that's the message of Romans 1 to 3. Isn't it? And Paul has been so scrupulous.

In kind of emptying our pockets. And saying your good works. You've got to put them in. They don't count. And your church attendance. You've got to put that in. And you've got to take your belt off. And you've got to take your shoes off.

And don't think. That you will be accepted by God. And enter into heaven. Still trying to hide your. Pen knife in your pocket. And it doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter whether you're dressed in a.

Shell suit. Or whether you're dressed in an Armani suit. Because. The message of the Christian gospel is. No more my God. I boast no more. Of all the duties I have done.

[ 31 : 27 ] I quit the hopes I held before. I trust for the merits of thy son. It's time today to empty your pockets. And may God deliver us.

As a church family. From pride to grace. Let's pray.