

Introduction:

- Luther referred to 3:21-26 as the chief point of the Bible. By faith alone, and by grace alone.
- In 3:27-:25 Paul set out to expound on the theological thesis of 3:21-26.
 - All are sinners.
 - Justification
 - Faith
 - Grace
- Paul's one main theme in this section is "justification by faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe!"
 - Faith is the topic of every paragraph in this section of the letter.
 - Faith is contrasted with five things in this section:
 - "works of the law" (3:28),
 - "works" (4:1-8),
 - circumcision (4:9-12),
 - the law (4:13-16), and
 - "sight" (4:17-22)
 - With these five contrast the hallmark of the section becomes: BY FAITH ALONE, *solo fide*.
- By faith alone is emphasized so that by grace alone stands out which leads to the inclusion of the Gentiles (Which has been Gods plan all along.)
- Paul is intent in this section to show how the Gospel breaks all the boundaries of the law yet lives in continuity with it.
- Romans 3:27-31 is the theme stated and 4:1-25 is Paul elaboration of the passage.

I. Can We Boast?

A. NO!

1. Can we boast, NO it is excluded. The word used in this passage means to exclude. To be taken out of sight.
2. Paul wants his readers to have nothing but Christ to boast about.

B. Justification by faith totally excludes any boasting by the Jews/Jewish Christians (27-28)

1. Boasting is a common sin to all. Addresses those who are trusting in their covenant with God, their chosen by God status, and keep of the law status. But boasting is common to all sinful people...unholy pride.
2. The reason for Paul excluding boasting is to contrast faith and works. Exclude is the word literally used in vs 27.
3. Paul goes on to stress that there is nothing wrong in doing the law, except when we start boasting in our achievement in keeping the law.

C. Justification by faith is the principal by which all men Gentile and Jews are allowed before God. (29-30) Therefore the principal of faith/law of faith is all that we can boast of.

1. If justification is of the law, then only the Jews have access.

2. If justification is by faith, then Gentile and Jew have access. Again his whole point is that all have sinned, all need righteousness, and all can get it through faith.
3. Vs 30 There is only one God. This is the mantra of the Jewish faith. "The Lord our God is one God."
 - a) If God is creator then He is the only God over all.
 - b) So the Jews confession of faith stresses that God must be God over all.

- D. Justification by faith does not nullify the law it fulfills it. vs 31
1. The law of Moses requires mans achievement in the Old covenant.
 2. The law of faith requires mans trust in the New Covenant.
 3. The righteousness that man needs therefore come from two different sources... man or God.
 4. "No works, whatever their nature or their motivation, can play any part in making a sinner right with God. Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (p. 251). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

II. By Faith Alone - Abraham

- A. In Chapter 4, Paul uses Abraham to stress his point that righteousness can only be obtained through faith.
1. Paul does this to stress his doctrine of justification by faith alone.
 2. And secondly to begin talking about the implication of this belief.
 3. *"And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith."* (Genesis 15:6, NLT)
- B. Overview of chapter four.
1. In verses 3-8, Paul shows that "Abrahams faith for righteousness" is such that by its very nature is excluding of any appeal to works.
 2. Next in verse 9-12, Paul contrasts circumcision verses uncircumcision regarding "Abrahams faith for righteousness" as something that occurred before he was circumcised, thereby enabling him to become the 'father' of both Jewish and Gentile believers.
 3. In 13-22, Paul takes the same concern as in 8-12 only this time he uses it stress that Abraham would be the father of 'many nations' or 'all the seed.'
 4. At the end of verse 22 Paul returns to Gen 15:6/Ro 4:6, he does this to apply the lessons learned that he has drawn from in chapter four.
 5. Again, in chapter four Paul expounds on the theme he introduces in 3:27-30.

III. What Abraham Has To Say - Paul's argument has four stages.

- A. First in verse 1-2 Paul establishes that it was not different for Abraham. He had nothing to boast about considering his works. His righteousness came by faith alone too!
1. In typical Paul fashion, he uses a rhetorical question to introduce his subject.
 2. "The flow of thought may be paraphrased: *"What shall we say about Abraham? For if we say he was justified by works, he has reason to boast, and my claim in 3:27-28 that*

all boasting is excluded is called into question." Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (p. 260). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

3. Jewish interpretation said, Abraham was justified by his works of obedience. Paul corrects that understanding. Gen 15:6
- B. Secondly, in verse three, Paul cites the scriptural evidence for Abrahams justification by faith.
 1. *"And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith."* (Genesis 15:6, NLT)
 2. It is the first time that believe is used in the scripture.
 3. And it is done so in connection with righteousness!
- C. Verse 4-5 shows this to be a gracious act of God not based on works or performance.
 1. Paul draws out two theological consequences from what he has just shared. One, works have no part in justification. Two, this is so because God's justifying work is not earned but freely given.
 2. The faith that gained Abraham righteousness excluded works. This is the practical application of these verses.
- D. Verses 6-8 confirm God's reckoning of our sin through forgiveness whereby we are made clean.
 1. Paul again is exclude works from justification by faith.
 2. David is quoted from Ps 32:1-2, he speaks both of forgiveness and of cleansing.
 3. The reason is obvious that Paul connects Ps 32:1-2 with Gen 15:6: Forgiveness, cleansing, righteousness!
 - a) Forgiveness of sin is a basic component of justification by faith.
 - b) It changes a persons relationship with God. They are acquitted and not condemned!

Conclusion:

- Paul concludes this thought or answer to the question: What did Abraham discover that made him right with God...justification by faith alone.
- This set Paul up to proceed to his next question: Is this blessing only for the Jews or is it for the uncircumcised Gentiles.