

Boasting?

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] We're going to begin this evening where we ended up last time.

! Not that anyone remembers, but we've been talking about how a person is saved.! And this evening we come to the topic of boasting.

And we briefly touched on that last week. A true call to faith, God's way, dispenses any boasting. We don't have any room to boast about anything. And that's very important. There's no room for the slightest boasting when it comes to our salvation.

If we mingle one minute work or one scintilla of our efforts to be saved, we are guilty of a heinous crime against God and His Son and the Holy Spirit.

[1 : 11] Salvation is by grace. And we're going to be looking at that. But there are a lot of movements, a lot of religions, even churches, that view salvation as a mixture of grace and works.

We call that works theology or a works religion. Justification. Justification. Justification then has to be earned and is not dispensed by grace.

God becomes the debtor to men as they boast before Him what they have accomplished. It was the great Apostle Paul who worked diligently to show us the depravity of man and his inability to please God through any fleshly deed.

It was Paul who wrote in Romans 3.19 that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God.

Now when we get our hands around that truth, we take our eyes off of ourselves and put it on God where it rightly deserves to be.

[2 : 31] And we look to Him in faith. And we're going to be talking about that. As Paul said to the Corinthians, He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.

The truth concerning boasting or not boasting is vitally important. Most people in the world are trying to earn a place with God and they're proud of it and proud of their achievements.

They are proud of their hard-earned relationship with the Almighty and they boast about it. Paul wipes out any argument of this in the third chapter of the book of Romans.

In the first part of that great chapter, Paul sets out with the precision of the Holy Spirit to prove that all men everywhere are sinners and that all men everywhere stand condemned before God.

And remind us it is the God who is perfect and righteous and sees the heart of man. One need only look at God's perfect law, which is described as a mirror, and have it reflect back upon us for us to see our horribly lost condition.

[4 : 00] And then toward the end of Romans chapter 3, Paul closes out his argument as to the condition of men by focusing on the cross as revealed in Scripture.

There, the Lord Jesus is portrayed as the propitiation or our propitiation. And that is a great word which we never use in conversation, at least in America.

It means the appeasement or the satisfaction. And from it, that word propitiation, we get the concept that Christ's sacrifice appeased the wrath of God.

And let me say, 20th century man and now 21st century man, they don't like that thought. They don't like that thought. But that's exactly what it does.

The Father looks at the cross and is satisfied for time and eternity that the sins of those who are being saved have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

[5 : 14] And His wrath is satisfied. It's propitiated, if you will. Now, how did Jesus, the spotless Lamb, accomplished it?

How did He accomplish this? He did so by bearing the sins of His people and suffering God's wrath in their place.

This gave God the Father the absolute freedom to justify wicked people, but without betraying His own standards of righteousness. We saw a video yesterday morning in Sunday school. Charles Price, a minister in Toronto. Good guy. Solid. And I'm sure like most ministers, ministers, not Mike, but you say something and say, I wish I could get that back. You know, but it's out there. And yesterday, Charles Price said, when he hung on the cross, Jesus in the eyes of God was a sinner. Well, that's not true.

[6 : 16] Jesus took upon Himself sin. He became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. But he was not a sinner.

He never even approached committing a sin. And so I had to clarify that with the class when it was over. And I'm sure Charles Price probably felt bad if he reviewed the tape.

Now, with all of this as fact, Paul closes the great chapter 3 by asking a question. He says this beginning in verse 27. Then what becomes of our boasting?

And of course, he's going to provide the answer. Aren't we glad? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a 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.

[7 : 22] Now, note how Paul closes out his argument with the words, Where is boasting? He also quickly provided the answer.

It is excluded. If we understood the Greek language, we would note here that the tense used means that boasting has fully and finally been excluded.

It is a biblical absolute. No ground for boasting. It has been decisively shut out.

There is no further room for boasting. There is not even room for discussion on the matter of boasting. Paul Worsher put it this way. It is as though Paul is saying of works.

Do you think it, let alone argue the matter? It has been excluded once and for all as a means of right standing before God.

[8 : 22] We should note that not all boasting has been excluded from the Bible. What has been excluded is any boasting based upon human effort.

We cannot and should not boast in any of our human efforts. We should not brag about our faith as if we were the ones that conjured it up. But we can and should boast in the Lord who purchased us by His blood.

We boast in God and His grace by which we are saved and kept. Even our hope is all of grace. It is all of grace.

How then are we saved without a shred of boasting? For that answer we turn to Paul's letter to the Ephesians. In the first chapter of Ephesians he says having predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

So we see here that our salvation is a matter of predestination and that is for probably the single most hated doctrine in the Bible.

[9 : 52] I came to it kicking and screaming but it is taught and we must deal with it. So how are we saved without boasting? Paul continues in Ephesians.

Very famous verses of Scripture. Ephesians 2 8 and 9 I'm sure most of you have it memorized. For by grace that's a powerful word isn't it?

For by grace you have been saved through faith another powerful word. And this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God not a result of works so that no one may boast. You know books have been written over well what did God mean by that?

For by grace you've been saved not your own is it is grace not your own or is faith not your own? And my answer to that is yes. Yes.

[10 : 58] This is the definitive passage on the elimination of boasting that we find in the word of God. We have been saved by grace and that grace was through faith.

That grace was through faith. But please note it's not our faith and it's certainly not our grace. We did not grunt and groan until we were able to somehow squeeze out a drop of acceptable faith.

And you know if it was like that then God is sitting there with the Lord Jesus in the throne room and they're both wringing their hands is anybody going to conjure up faith today? Or are we just going to have to go to bed tonight and no one's going to get saved?

No. Of course not. We don't conjure it up. This is a faith that comes to us from outside of ourselves. And we discover that it is a faith that is a gift.

It's a gift. And it's a gift of God. God gives us a gift. God gives us a gift. And that my brothers eliminates boasting of any type except boasting in the Lord and His achievements.

[12 : 25] That's what we boast in. The amazing thing is that any message on boasting is met by disdain and rejection of multitudes of people in the church.

It's not just world's religions that do that. It's in evangelical churches. When one speaks to people about human depravity, a total lack of human merit as it pertains to salvation, our desperate need of the grace of God.

When people speak about our inability to achieve this on our own righteousness, people are offended. and they get angry. I had a guy in this church about 50 feet that way told me one time, you know, we had a little discussion.

It was friendly. And he said, God didn't choose me. I chose him. I remember when I did it. He had anything to do with it. And I thought, wow, that's a revelation.

Why do people get angry? Probably because people always want to know what's my part in this. Right?

[13 : 40] There's no free lunch. I've got to do something to earn it. So what is my part in this? How do I contribute to my salvation?

Because we know there's no such thing as a free lunch. So what do we give to be saved? I remember what I brought to the Lord.

A couple of ten gallon buckets of sin. That's all I had to offer Him. And I left a lot of it behind. Way behind. We don't bring anything to the cross.

Christ did it all. So let's delve a little deeper into the topic of salvation. And let me read to you what arguably may be the greatest most eloquent and most important passage in the Bible as what we must do to be saved.

Back in Romans chapter 10 and I'm going to begin in verse 6. But the righteousness based on faith says do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven that is to bring Christ down who will descend into the abyss that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

[15 : 05] But what does it say? The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith that we proclaim. Because if you confess with your mouth faith that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

That is an extremely important passage in every age and especially in our day.

there is a danger even in reform doctrine. Are we saying that a person that is being saved does absolutely nothing?

And we're not saying that. It reminds me of the person who told of the great reform pastors of his day in Scotland. He went to his pastor and this was a couple hundred years ago and he said, I really think I'm one of the elect of God.

so I'm going to get up every morning and I'm going to go out to my favorite place in some nearby woods and sit on a stump and wait and see if God does anything.

[16 : 26] The pastor told him, if you do that until you die, you will then go and spend eternity in hell. He told him that. And I would have added, salvation is never achieved by osmosis.

you don't just sit there and breathe the air. We have certain requirements that we must do to be saved. Now this sounds like, oh my gosh, he's just reversed it.

No, I haven't. One, we must believe. You can't be saved and not believe. And we'll talk later where that comes from in more detail.

The other is we must confess Christ as the scriptures tell us. We must confess the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believe in Him. This is vitally necessary to understand. We're not saved by deeds we do. We are saved by calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in faith.

[17 : 35] And I like telling people what that means. That means sovereign king, savior, the anointed one from God, Lord Jesus Christ. That's who we embrace in faith.

Whom if you're from outside Oklahoma. Paul addresses the great theological error that was being experienced in his day by the Jewish people.

In our day it's not just the Jews but all man devised man-centered religions, cults, and even I'm sad to say some evangelical denominations that engage in error.

That is how Paul addressed the problem in Israel. In Romans 10 he says brothers my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

Talk about the Jews. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own they did not submit to God's righteousness for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

[18 : 55] The Jewish people in Paul's day were quite zealous but without the proper knowledge of God's way to salvation. they thought they were saved because they were children of Abraham.

And osmosis because I'm a child of Abraham I'm automatically in. They forgot the great truth given them by John the Baptist who warned that God could raise up children of Abraham from rocks and stones.

He didn't need their faith. they rejected the atoning work of Christ although it had been prophesied for generations in the Old Testament.

The Jewish people sought a relationship with God through a righteousness they thought they could achieve through rigorous obedience to the law.

law. And it was rigorous at least in public view. We don't know what went on behind the scenes. It reminds me of being in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and all the wealthy Arab guys showed up in their dresses and the clothing.

[20 : 16] You've seen it over in that part of the world. And abstained from Ramadan they wouldn't eat, they wouldn't drink, we took off and the flight attendant comes back and announces we've cleared Saudi airspace.

All foes came, they were in business suits, the whiskey came out, they landed in London, a bevy of females were there to greet them. I mean, all just fake and false as it could be.

Paul tried to point them to the saving work of Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. And he wanted to put an end to every attempt to establish a person's own individual righteousness based upon human merit and human effort.

And you know, Paul, when he was Saul, did more human work than probably any ten men. And he hated the church, he persecuted the church, the chief persecutor, and he was zealously working for the high priest, thought he was working for God.

And now it's totally reversed. That's what happens when you are on the Damascus road. In its proper context, the law places demands upon people that cannot be achieved.

[21 : 45] I've said before, we can't fulfill the great commandment, the greatest commandment. We can't, we've never fulfilled that for one second. To love God with all? No, we've never arrived at that yet.

Paul said, it's going to be easier for you to ascend into heaven or descend into the abyss than to keep the law so as to be saved.

We remember that the law had to be kept perfectly to live up to God's holy standards. God was very clear about that.

You had to be perfect in keeping the law. Faith is at a completely different level than is the keeping of rules or regulations or laws.

Faith does not require, I hope I get this right, Mike, I was thinking of you when I wrote this, Herculean, like Hercules, Herculean efforts to achieve success.

[22 : 53] Faith does not require conforming to a set of man-made religions, or rules rather, such as the father of works, some of you may have heard of that.

That was 613 rules devised by the Jewish leadership by which people were to live their lives.

They had 613 of them. They tried to cover everything that could happen to you in your life. And if you lived up to these, you proved you were a righteous person and eligible for heaven.

And they had all kinds of things, like you could only walk so many feet from your home on the Sabbath. And there's a danger that you would pick up a tack in your sandal, and as you traveled you'd be carrying a burden, which was a violation of Sabbath law.

If you found a lamb in a pit, you really couldn't get it out. You might go back the next day if they were still alive and get it out, but that would be working on the Sabbath.

[24 : 02] A physician could come up on an injured person and he could treat him, but if the guy improved, the physician did a work on the Sabbath. If he just stabilized him, it was okay.

Ridiculous stuff. Ridiculous stuff. Aren't you glad faith isn't based on any of that? You know, I couldn't even memorize 613 rules and regulations.

Faith is not based upon accomplishments. It's not based on human effort. Faith calls upon a person. And this is so exquisitely beautiful of our true God who has appeared in the three persons of the Trinity.

Faith calls upon a person to acknowledge their helpless condition and to rest solely upon the finished work of Christ.

And dare I say to you, that's not a one-time event. That's your daily prayer, guys. Your helpless condition. And we rest in the finished work of Christ.

[25 : 10] They could have confidence in their relationship with God because they had believed in their hearts the gospel message. Christ came to save sinners, of which Tom Holland is the chief.

That's in the scriptures. And they openly confess Jesus Christ as Lord. I'm amazed that in my day, maybe a little bit before your time, but maybe not, the great debate was, well, do we believe in Jesus as Savior or Lord?

There's no debate there. Or the other one that gets under my skin, have you made Jesus Lord of your life? You don't make Jesus Lord. He is Lord.

I didn't do anything to make Him Lord. I wasn't even around. And in the middle of the 20th century, something quite interesting and in some respects devastating happened to the evangelical church. And I say interestingly, it didn't really happen to reformed churches. But a lot of dispensational churches, of which I was one, bought into this hook, line, and sinker.

[26 : 21] prayer. And I'm speaking of the invention and application of the sinner's prayer as a quick means of salvation. That became popular in the middle 20th century, maybe a little beyond the middle, 1970, 1965.

No one knows precisely where this means of evangelism originated. I do know Dr. Graham employed it. He wasn't the only one.

He wasn't the first one. It is still in use today. It shows up in most tracks. If someone walks up to you and gives you a track on the street, it is still in use on a fairly wide scale.

The sinner's prayer is an effort by the witness of inviting them to Christ. And that's step one. And then step two is giving them the assurance that they are now saved and on their way to heaven. And let me address that second part because I know I left that out of my notes and I'll forget it. Oh, wait a minute. It's in there. You'll just have to hang on my every word. Most sinners' prayers involve some of the following elements.

[27 : 39] Confess that you are a sinner. Acknowledge your inability to save yourself. Confess that Jesus died for you and rose from the dead. Invite Jesus to come into your heart and be your Savior.

Now that process only takes bare minutes or moments. It is often concluded by assuring the new convert that he's now saved and because of the doctrines of once saved, always saved, which we hold, once truly saved, I always put that in there, he or she can never lose what salvation they've just acquired.

we must honestly state that some of those elements that I just read are true. They're true. That's not the problem.

But the sinner's prayer as the predominant means of attaining salvation in an individual is still fraught with some dangerous objections. First objection, sinner's prayer is not biblical.

It was never used by Christ. It was never used by the apostles. It was not used by the early Christians.

[28 : 47] You won't find it in the writings of the church fathers. That's that second century guys. They didn't write inerrantly, but they were doing commentaries on what the apostles had done in the New Testament.

And I've got them if you want to borrow them, 38 volumes. I won't need them back for a few weeks. objection two, the sinner's prayer was not employed as a means of leading someone to Christ in the long history of the church.

I mean, down through the Reformation and everything that followed. In that regard, it's a recent invention. Some guys have said, hey, if it's new, it may not be true. There's nothing new under the sun, guys.

Objection three, the sinner's prayer has reduced the gospel message down to the lowest common denominator that is most palpable to the most people at a given time.

It finds its greatest appeal in mass evangelism. Where people, and maybe feeling some pressure from the crowd or from the people that brought them or whatever, they will come forward, they'll be led in that prayer, or they'll be told to repeat my words, just repeat these words, but you've got to be sincere.

[30 : 06] And in that regard, it has practically turned the wonderful gospel message into a creedal statement. And by creedal, I mean it follows a path of religious tradition which may or may not be biblical.

Because you get different forms of this. Objection four, it has the practical effect of eliminating the Bible's command that salvation is open to those who repent and believe.

I've had a dozen tracks, different tracks on this, and they never mention, they never get around, and most of them mentioning repent and believe. And those are two essentials.

That's what we've been studying nine weeks now. You must repent and believe. Objection five, it has replaced biblical assurance which only comes from the witness of the Holy Spirit.

That's what I was going to tell you about. I don't have the authority to assure somebody, hey, you know what, you're now saved. I don't have that authority. Why?

[31 : 11] I've done it, but I was wrong. I don't know their heart. I don't know if God just saved them. I don't know their heart. And I've not been given any authority to declare a person, okay, you're okay now.

I think it was D.L. Moody, it could have been Billy Sunday, I'm not sure, but probably both of them. But walking down the street in a big city, if it was D.L. Moody, it would have been Chicago. This stumbling drunk comes up to him.

He's about to fall over. And he says, don't you recognize me, Mr. Moody? I'm one of your converts. He says, you look like one of my converts. converts. He said, you need to be one of the Lord's converts.

It is a form of having faith in your faith. That's the danger here. A lot of people have faith in their faith. And that's not true faith. That's not the biblical sin.

We have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, where we're headed with all this, and I know it seems brief, but we've been here almost 35 minutes. We need to know how God wants us to apply Romans 10, 9 and 10 in the context of biblical salvation.

[32 : 39] That's very important. I'll read it again. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. We're going to spend some time next week looking at confessing with our mouths and believing in our hearts.

Confessing Jesus is Lord and believing in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead. God will have him to him to him him to him He's a!

He's a one to He's