

**Sermon Title: The Divine Provision is Accessed by Faith, Part 1**

**Sermon Text: Romans 3:27-31**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand the necessity of recognizing true saving faith evidence.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 points of clarity related to the subject of justification by faith alone.**

**Introduction:** In Romans 3:27-4:25, Paul expands on the great theological theme of Romans 3:21-26. He focuses on one key element of this theme. Paul, concentrates and expands the understanding of his audience on the theme found in v.22: “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” Paul uses a series of illustrations to draw out the nature and implications of faith as the only means of justification. Sola fide – “faith alone” is the means by which one is brought into relationship with God!

**I. Justification by faith excludes any possibility of boasting on the part of Jews or Gentiles. VV.27-28**

No one can boast in self-effort, works, or man-made religion. (**Romans 4:1-2**)

**1 Corinthians 1:26** For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. **27** But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; **28** and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, **29** that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Faith is not the cause of justification but the means of justification, the cause of salvation is God’s grace and mercy. The object of our salvation is Jesus Christ. (**1 Corinthians 1:29**)

**A. Beliefs that neither prove nor disprove true saving faith.**

**1. Visible morality neither proves nor disproves true faith.**

Some pagans and cultists put many Christians to shame by their high standards of behavior.

The rich young ruler demonstrates the problem. By his refusal to obey Christ, the man demonstrated that his outward obedience to the law was not done out of love for God or for the purpose of His glory but was done out of self-love and for the purpose of his own self-interest.

**2. Intellectual knowledge of Scripture neither proves nor disproves true saving faith.**

It is possible to have a great deal of knowledge about God’s Word and yet be unsaved. Example would be scribes and Pharisees of Jesus day, and scholars throughout the ages. (**Romans 2:17, 23-24**)

**Ezekiel 36:20** "When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name-- when they said of them, 'These *are* the people of the LORD, *and* yet they have gone out of His land.' **21** "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. **22** "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. **23** "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

**3. Religious involvement neither proves nor disproves true saving faith.**

In the Old Testament, the Lord repeatedly condemned the Israelites for their meticulous outward observance of the Mosaic ordinances and ceremonies while having no trust in Him. (**Matthew 23:1-23 Ten Virgins**)

4. **Active ministry in Christ's name neither proves nor disproves true saving faith.**  
 Outwardly Judas was as active as the other disciples, witnessed by the fact that he served as their trusted treasurer.  
**Matthew 7:21** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. **22** "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' **23** "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"
  5. **Conviction of sin neither proves nor disproves true saving faith.**  
 Mental institutions throughout the world are filled with people who are so burdened by the knowledge of their sinfulness that they cannot function in society.  
 Their sense of guilt becomes so overpowering that it drove them to insanity – but it did not drive them to find their peace and rest in Christ.  
 Other people who are under correction of their sin determine by sheer willpower to reform themselves. This tends to only lead to pride in themselves not faith in God.  
**Man and the evil spirits.**  
**Matthew 12:43** "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. **44** "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. **45** "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."
  6. **Assurance of salvation is not an infallible mark that proves or disproves true saving faith.**  
 The world is filled with people who are sincerely convinced in their own minds that they are right with God and that their place in heaven is guaranteed.  
**(Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 13:1-5)**  
**James 1:22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
  7. **The experience of a past "decision" for Christ neither proves nor disproves true saving faith.**  
 If no evidence of godly living as a direction of life, results from the "decision" no matter how strong and sincere the profusion seemed to be, it is no proof of salvation.
- B. **Reliable evidence of true saving faith provided by God.**
1. **The first reliable evidence of saving faith is love for God.**  
 The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God and has no desire to love Him.  
**(Romans 8:7)** The unsaved person cannot love God. The true child of God, however, despite his often failing his heavenly Father, will have a life characterized by delight in God and His Word.  
**Psalm 1:2** But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.  
**Psalm 42:1** As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. **2** My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?  
**Matthew 10:37** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.  
**1 Peter 2:7** Therefore, to you who believe, *He* is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"

2. **The second reliable evidence of saving faith is repentance from sin and hatred of sin, this always accompanies true contrition.**

The person who genuinely loves God will have a built-in hatred of sin. It is impossible to love two things that are contradictory of one another.

**Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

To love God is to hate sin and what it causes.

**Proverbs 28:13** He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

This verse connects the two inseparable parts of true repentance: the confession and forsaking of sin.

**Psalm 51:1** Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. **3** For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin *is* always before me. **4** Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight-- That You may be found just when You speak, *And* blameless when You judge.

The true believer often hates sin even while he is doing it and always after he has done it, because it is completely contrary to his new nature in Christ. (**Romans 7:16**) There is no peace of conscience until he repents of it.

3. **The third reliable evidence of true saving faith is genuine humility.**

A person cannot be saved as long as he trusts in and exalts himself.

(**Luke 15:17-21**)

**Matthew 5:3** "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

4. **The fourth reliable evidence of true saving faith is devotion to God's glory.**

**Philippians 1:20** according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

This desire may not be seen in perfection in the true believers life, it will be evidenced in the direction of their life.

5. **The fifth reliable evidence of true saving faith is prayerfulness.**

In the innermost being, communion of fellowship with their heavenly Father will be a desire of their heart.

Jonathan Edwards succinctly observed, "Hypocrits [are] deficient in the duty of prayer,"

(The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 2 [Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1986 reprint], pp. 71-77)

6. **The sixth reliable evidence of saving faith is selfless love, for God and for other people, especially fellow Christians.**

(**1 John 2:9-10; 3:14; 4:7-8**)

7. **The seventh reliable evidence of saving faith is separation from the world.**

(**1 John 2:15-16; 5:4-5**)

**John 17:15** "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. **16** "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. **18** "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

**1 Corinthians 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

8. **The eighth reliable evidence of saving faith is spiritual maturity and growth.**

While it is true believers will always grow spiritually to varying degrees, because by faith they have genuinely received the seed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Mark 4:26** And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, **27** "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. **28** "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

**Ephesians 4:13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

**Philippians 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

9. **The ninth reliable evidence of saving faith is consistent habitual obedient living.**

**1 John 3:10** In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest:

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

[The points in A and B were taken from John MacArthur's commentary on Romans.]

**Conclusion:** We understand that no one is saved by good works, or works of the law, but we also know those who are truly saved by grace will produce as a way of life, by faith and God's enabling power of the Holy Spirit, good works.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.