

MAIN POINT

Salvation is received by grace through faith, not by works of the law.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever known anyone who liked to brag about their accomplishments? Have you ever been guilty of bragging about your own? What causes us to feel the need to brag about ourselves?

What is it about being boastful that we do not like in others? How does grace exclude boasting?

When we boast, we exalt ourselves over others. When we brag, we give words to our pride, and the more space we give to our own pride, the less space we have for others. Bragging doesn't allow any admiration for the accomplishments of others. Boasting is a demand for attention. Bragging is selfish. Paul taught that in the gospel, we are not given any room to brag. There is no way to laud ourselves in how great we are because first, the law teaches that we aren't so great, and second, the gospel is a gift not given on personal merit. The bad news about us is that we can never earn salvation because we all break the law of God. The gospel excludes boasting in ourselves because we didn't earn salvation anyway. The gospel is a gift to be believed, not a wage that can be earned.

DISCUSSION

> READ ROMANS 4:1-25.

If we are not saved by works, what role do works play in the life of the believer? Why can't we boast about our works?

How can God declare "the ungodly to be righteous" without being unjust or lying?

Why is it important to point out that Abraham was credited with faith before he was circumcised? What does it mean for Abraham to be the father of those who are not circumcised?

If the promise of salvation comes through law, why is faith made empty?

Why does the law produce only wrath? What are the implications for us?

What does it mean that righteousness was credited to Abraham? What does this indicate about Abraham's faith in the coming Messiah?

What does it mean that Jesus was "raised for our justification"? What is justification?

How freeing is it to know that we will be judged by Christ's works and not our own? How will your life look different this week if you truly embrace that change?

APPLICATION

This passage demonstrates that the gospel is for all people, whether they are Jew or Gentile. Can you think of anyone you might share the gospel with who needs to be free from the punishment of the law?