# *"Justifications Great Exclusions"*

## *(Romans 3:27 – 4:12)*

**The Big Idea:**

**Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone excludes boasting but exudes praise. (Romans 3:27 – 4:12)**

**<u>What Justification Excludes, and What Justification Exudes</u>**

**1. Justification by grace through faith excludes PRIDE but exudes PRAISE. (Romans 3:27-31)**

**2. Justification by grace through faith excludes PERFORMANCE but exudes PRAISE. (Romans 4:1-8)**

**3. Justification by grace through faith excludes POSITION but exudes PRAISE. (Romans 4:9-12)**

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**THE BIG IDEA**

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1. **The Opening Illustration** — Alex Haley kept a painting of a turtle on a fence post as a reminder that the turtle got there only because someone placed it there. How does this picture help us grasp the meaning of justification by grace alone? Where in your own story do you see God's "lifting hand" most clearly?

2. **Pride Excluded (Romans 3:27–31)** — Paul asks, "Then what becomes of our boasting?" and answers, "It is excluded." Why does justification by faith (apart from works of the law) shut the door on pride? How should this truth turn our hearts toward "the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14) rather than self-congratulation?

3. **Performance Excluded (Romans 4:1–8)** — Abraham believed God, and it was "counted" (credited) to him as righteousness—centuries before the Law and before circumcision. David later celebrated the blessing of the one whose sins are not counted against him. Why is it so important that both Abraham and David were justified by faith and not by performance? What does verse 5 ("him who justifies the ungodly") reveal about the scandalous freeness of grace?

4. **Position Excluded (Romans 4:9–12)** — Abraham was declared righteous while still uncircumcised, making him the father of all who believe—Jew and Gentile alike. How does this truth dismantle any pride based on religious heritage, cultural background, or spiritual "position"? What does it mean for how we view and welcome people who come from very different backgrounds than our own?

5. **Living the Truth** — The sermon summarized the passage with three exclusions that all produce the same result: exclusion of pride, performance, and position → the exuding of praise. Where are you most tempted to lean on pride, performance, or position for your sense of standing with God? What is one practical way this week you can intentionally turn that area into praise for the grace you have received rather than achieved?

**For Further Reflection / Prayer**

*Spend a few minutes together thanking God that justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Ask Him to root out any lingering pride and to fill the group with genuine praise for the One who lifted us up and set us in a place we could never reach on our own.*