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Romans 4 verses 9 through 15. These are God's words. Does this blessedness then? Come upon the circumcised only. Or upon the uncircumcised also, For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham. For righteousness. How then was it, accountant? While he was circumcised. Or uncircumcised. Not while circumcised. But while uncircumcised, And he received the sign of circumcision.

A seal. Of the righteousness of the faith. Which he had while still uncircumcised. That he might be the father of all those, who believe That they are uncircumcised. That righteousness might be imputed to them also. And the father of the circumcision. To those who not only are of the circumcision.

But who also walk in the steps of the faith. Which our father abraham had while still. On circumcised. For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to abraham or to his seed through the law. But through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs.

Faith has made void. And the promise made of no effect. Because the law. Brings about wrath. For the rare for where there is no law. There is no. Transgression. So far, the reading of gods inspired. And inherent word. Praise god. What we contribute to our blessedness? Is the sin of which we need to be forgiven in order to be blessed.

He gives us faith and through that faith. He imputes righteousness to us. That's what we've been hearing the last couple of weeks and the last couple of passages. But this brings up a question for those, especially the jews who had thought. I'm blessed because i'm a child of abraham.

Blessing is his inheritance. And if i'm his heir, If i'm descended from abraham, then i get to be blessed with him. In fact, didn't god, give him and me the same sign? That justice abraham was circumcised, which was god's covenant with him. The sign was so closely associated. With the covenant that in genesis 17, he says that circumcision is his covenant.

And i have the same sign and therefore the same covenant and therefore the same blessing. Isn't circumcision. The way that i am an heir. Of abraham. And an heir with Abraham. Isn't that how i received the blessing? And so the apostle takes us back then to genesis, he asks this question.

Does this blessedness, then come upon the circumcised only or upon the uncircumcised also In other words, Is circumcision so necessary. That even if you believe in jesus, you still have to be circumcised. Now, we have seen already that the jerusalem syndrome acts 15 and answered that question with a resounding.

No. But there were still some Jews. Apparently, at least in this congregation in Rome. And as we read the new testament, we find that It was really quite widespread. Who thought that circumcision was necessary. Because circumcision was how you knew that you were a descendant from abraham, an heir.

Of abraham and with abraham. And so, the apostle first is going to take us back to genesis And just recount a little bit of chapter 15 or interpret for us. Remind us, of a little bit of what chapter 15 teaches and chapter 17, teaches and how those things fit together.

The blessedness was promised by god and secured. By imputed righteousness. And he shows that from genesis 15 verse 6, again this week, which we saw or started thinking about two weeks ago, And then if circumcision, Was not how the promise came and not, how the promise was secured. Then it was a sign and a seal.

Of a promise that had already been made and already secured. And so you could have the promise and the thing promised without circumcision at all. But circumcision was given by god as a help assign and to seal And we'll see that briefly in the first part of verse 11.

If that's the case then it's actually not true. That abraham's true heirs the one who receive the promised thing blessedness of god. Uh through the righteousness that god cans for him. It's not actually true that abraham's true heirs are the circumcised Rather. Abraham's true. Heirs are those who believe.

And we'll see that. In the second part of verse 11. And the rest of verse 12, And then, we'll Uh, we'll hear about if it had been true. This isn't this isn't something new that the apostles teaching That if it had been true. That circumcision was how to come into blessedness that circumcision rather than being a sign or a seal was a sort of work.

Through which blessing could come. Then no blessing would have ever been received. Because that would make god unfaithful. It would undo what he had said in his promise and what he had said about faith. And, If circumcisions at work. Than we would find ourselves in. In the same trouble in the same difficulty.

That we have been finding ourselves ever since chapter 1. And that is that we cannot do any good works. So, we don't want circumcision. To be the way to obtain, blessedness. Because if it's not a sign or a seal but rather a work, something that you can do by which to earn or obtain, Uh, the blessedness Then all that we will obtain is wrath.

Not blessing. And so in the first place, he takes us back to Genesis. He says For we say that faith was accounted to abraham for righteousness. You remember, that's been one of the main points. The last couple of weeks. How did Abraham become righteous before God? Was his faith rewarded with righteousness as a work did, did god?

Look upon Faith that abraham had offered to him and say that deserves. Righteousness, that deserves reward or Was it accounted to him? For righteousness. Was abraham not righteous. His faith. Not something that deserved righteousness. But a an instrument through which he was counted righteous. By what jesus deserved. As jesus, the one who has deserved the righteousness and that was, that was dealt with in verses 1 through 4.

A couple of weeks ago and then versus five through eight again, really thinking out of psalm 32 at that point. But still, if you look at verse 5, thinking about the blessedness, Of the one who's faith is accounted for righteousness. He does not work, but his faith is accounted for righteousness.

And here again, he reminds us Uh, that faith was accounted to abraham for righteousness in verse 9. And so he just asks us a chronology question, a timeline question. When in genesis was faith, accounted to abraham for righteousness? That's genesis 15 verse 6. And when in genesis, Does abraham receive the sign of circumcision?

When does he get circumcised? And that's not until chapter 17. Which is more than a decade. After Genesis 15 verse 6. So he says, how then was it accounted while he was circumcised? Or uncircumcised not while circumcised but while uncircumcised. Now. When he takes us back to genesis 15 he takes us back to what is really the great hope and expectation of the gospel.

You remember, what had just happened there? Had been that world war and the coalition of nations and armies that had won under codoraleomer had Then taken. A lot abraham's nephew captive and abraham with the trained men. Just from his house had overtaken them and had defeated the alliance that had just won the world war.

And had freed his nephew lot. And then Melchizedek whom we know is and from the book of Hebrews is A pre-incarnation appearance of the lord, jesus christ appears to abraham and abraham learns from him. To know. The to call god. All of his blessedness and then the king of sodom comes and offers him a deal and and abraham says i'm not going to take a sandal strap from you.

All of my blessing comes from god alone. And it could be very lonely at that point. When you have just Made an enemy possibly. Of the winning coalition. Of the world war. And it's at that point, that at the beginning of Genesis 15, the lord appears to genesis and says, behold.

I am don't fear abraham or actually it's abram still at that point. Don't fear abram i will be your shield and your exceedingly great reward. This is this is what we get. By jesus christ. Jesus christ is what we get by jesus christ. He didn't just give himself for us.

To suffer the hell that we deserve and to take away our sin to offer and to be the righteousness that we need in order to have a right standing before. God, he gave himself for us in order to give himself to us. That he would be our shield. That he would be are exceedingly great reward.

And this is the promise that is that has talked about in this passage when it talks about Uh, the promise that he would be heir of the world, it's not that he would be the heir who inherits the world so much is that he would be the heir of all things.

That he would be the heir of god himself. Now, that is what God had promised. And you remember what Abram had responded, he said how how shall i know how? Shall i inherit? I'm an old man. I'm gonna die soon. And even if it counted for my children, there's one problem with that.

I don't have any A servant born in my house. So these are of Damascus. He is the one who's going to inherit it all? And it's at that point, that the lord promises to abraham to Abram at that time. It's that point that the Lord promises to Abram, That one from his own body.

Would be his heir. One, who solves the The problem. Objection that abraham's. Weak mind and heart have against this promise that god has made. He solves the death problem. And his promising him that jesus will be. Will come from his own flesh and that that will be how God ends up being Abram's shield forever and ever.

And abraham's very great reward exceedingly, great reward, forever and ever. And jesus is the solution to your death problem. The only solution you can have And jesus is the way that god is your shield forever and ever. That god himself as your reward. Forever and ever. That's the promise.

And that had nothing to do at all with circumcision. Circumcision comes later. They're not exactly sure the amount of time between, With a genesis 15 and the the that promise being

made. And genesis 17, but we do know it's at least 14 years. Why? Because he doesn't have Ishmael yet.

You remember it was after God had made the promise that he would have a descendant from his own body. That they gave up waiting on that promise. And that by Sarai's suggestion, she had given him Hagar and that whole mess of unbelief and sin. And what we have is at least 14 years, Of the silence of God.

And Ishmael, turns out to be as a scripture says a wild donkey of a man. Then, you can imagine. The one who had received the promise. And the one whose faith had been counted to him for righteousness. But he had. He had. Not had. Strong consistent faith. And he had sinned greatly and now here he was.

And, and Ishmael was his son. Of 14 years. And God appeared to him again. In. In Genesis 17. He had said God, I am God almighty walk before me. And be blameless. And so it was not while he was circumcised that Abraham or sorry that Abram had received. The.

The promise. And that he had been accounted right to righteous faith, but while he was uncircumcised, and in fact, when he received circumcision, it was not a response to faith, but to unbelief. And it was not a response to how well Abraham had done. But to the sin, Because God, who is saving him by grace alone?

Through faith alone was about to call Abraham to repentance. And he did. So, by giving him a sign. That said that the promise of God was still sure. And that righteousness that had come through faith, could not be lost. Did the exact opposite. Of what circumcision would do. If circumcision.

Was a work. So the blessing of Abraham was promised apart from works and apart from circumcision, God just comes to him in Genesis 15 verse 1 and he makes the promise And the blessing of Abraham that had probably been promised apart from works was secured by faith, that was accounted or imputed for righteousness.

That's Genesis 15 verse 6. Circumcision comes as it were late. It was God's assurance that the promise of chapter 15 and the righteousness of chapter 15 were still in effect. Despite Abram's remaining unbelief and sin, and of course, God calls him to repentance there. But he gives him the sign in part, so that Abram won't fall into thinking that his repenting is, what's going to secure The blessing.

No God had promised the blessing. And God had accounted him righteous through faith. That's what would secure the blessing. And so often we when we have sinned, when our faith has been weak and we come back to God, knowing that his word calls us to repentance. We too have our own baptisms, don't we?

Signs and seals that it is Christ alone who saves and that, that promise is sure. And that the righteousness that is obtained through that faith cannot be lost. So that even as he calls us to repentance, And reminds us that we are his walk before me. And be blameless.

The sign points us to how God alone saves. According to the word of his promise. Through the righteousness that he counts for us. Through faith alone. And this is where we get the language of sign and seal and this is over against the idea that circumcision could be a work.

So verse 11. The first part and he received the sign of circumcision. A seal. Of the righteousness. Of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised. So what's a sign? Assign is.

A picture. That points to something. It's a lesson a symbol. Uh, the sign of circumcision, signifies many things that we find in others, in other scriptures, It's a sign.

It's a lesson that god has to cut away. Are fleshliness from us. The. Language of circumcision is used of the heart to reminding us that circumcision of the flesh doesn't do anything but that it does remind us or teach us that when god cuts away our fleshliness, he takes away our heart of stone and he gives us a heart to flesh.

Tells us don't be circumcised in your flesh. You need to be circumcised in your hearts and then he tells us in another passage that he is the one who circumcises the heart. Circumcision as a sign that god himself applies. Atoning blood to us. It's a bloody sign. And you remember, Of course, moises and his wife and her throwing The.

The foreskin the bloody foreskin. At. The feet. God himself will apply atoning blood. It's a sign. That abraham and especially his descendants needed to have god as father. Not just abraham as father. It's a sign that comes. In. Uh, in the flesh and away that reminds abraham, that the children whom he begets Need to have god as their father.

Not just abraham. And so it's a sign of salvation that comes righteousness. That comes by god, are turning for us by god, changing, our hearts, by god, giving us faith to be joined to jesus christ. By god, taking us to be his children. By his promise. Well, what's a seal?

Perhaps, you've heard the phrase seal of authenticity. Seal is something that is given to assure of the truthfulness. Of. Of a promise or the accuracy. Of something that has said, It's a seal in that, it's a physical demonstration. That he had been set apart covenantly. After genesis 17, abraham would literally be able to know from a physical demonstration in his flesh.

That all that god had said about him being set apart to God, about god being his shield about god, being his reward about all the nations being blessed in him. That all of these things were true. God had given him a physical demonstration. A physical reminder that he has been set apart covenantly.

It was an assurance. To abraham's faith of what god had promised. You see the god who had given the sign. And the god who had applied the sign to him. Is the only one who could have given Abraham the faith that he had and he was the god who had given the promise as well.

And so he would remember. By the sign everything that god had said to him. And that the god who had given him. Both is true and faithful. And what he promises really will come to pass. Just like you have signs, not only the sign of baptism. Which reminds you that the one who commanded the baptism while he was still on earth is the one who pours out his spirit from heaven.

And also, we have the sign of the lord's supper. And we hear that wonderful phrase, the lord jesus on the night. That who is betrayed, And remember that the one who started the meal, the one who commanded that i eat the bread, that i drink the cup. That he on the very next day from doing that.

Gave himself for sinners. Took the wrath of god for our sins. And that everything he has said in his word, every experience i have had of him. My faith weak as it is. My repentance weak as it is is something that he has given me. Just like the supper is something that he has given me just like, baptism is something that he has given me.

And so the external signs assure me of the truth and reality. Of all that i have heard from christ and all that i have experienced. Of christ. What's more? It was a seal. Sign and a seal that was

put upon his son as well. And so he knew that his son wasn't just Part of god's people because he happened to be tagging along with Abram.

He was part of god's people because god had picked that son for him. And god had put his son among god's people. And so, when we have, when we come and our children are baptized by the command of christ. We don't fall into saying, well, the only reason they're in the church is because they're my kids after all, and they are just as likely to be lost.

Does anybody else? Because they can't be saved, unless they're regenerated or they believe it's true. That they can't be saved unless they were regenerated or they or believe, unless they are brought to life so that they can believe. But the reason they're in the church is because god picked that child for my house.

And god picked my house for that. Child, because god put that child in his church. God put my child. In his church. And so i have good hope because god is the one who must save him. If he's going to have faith, it has to come from god. And praise god.

The one from whom, he has to get his faith. Is the one who put him in my house and put the sign on him. Now, instead of, uh, instead of teaching him, the bible day by day and giving him the discipline and instruction of the lord and and bringing him To to the assembly week by week and sitting under preaching with him and helping him as he learns how to worship and learns, how to attend upon the preaching.

Now, instead of doing all those things, hoping that i am doing them well enough. That it's gonna take. I'm doing them because the god who put him him in my family and put him in his church is the one who uses all of these things. And so i'm not doing them saying.

But what if it doesn't take And doing them saying, my hope for this child. Is in the god who has given all of these things. And who has set him apart in his church and he hasn't set him a part in his church to know effect or for no reason.

He is encouraged me to believe that he is saving my child. He turns my eyes. Turns abraham's eyes, her hope for Ishmael or for Isaac away from himself. And to god instead, He does the same with us. Circumcision, therefore is not a work. Praise god. But a sign and a seal.

There are lots of works in parenting. But the sign and the seal that god gives us for our children. Points us to god. Who works through those things. And not to our working. In those things. So, faith is not a work. And circumcision is not a work. And the parenting that we, Do for our children.

In obedience to god is a work. But it is not what we're hoping in. As we do the work. They're not saved as a wage earned by our parenting. They're saved by the same grace that saved us. And that's why god one of the reasons God gives them the same sign.

And the same seal so that when they come to faith, They will respond to their own baptism. The way we are responding to ours, and the way we have been responding to theirs, It's the last missing piece children. Your parents if they're walking according to the scripture, they don't hope in their own baptism for salvation, they're baptism, assures them, that the christ and whom they believe surely will save them.

Your parents don't hope in your baptism to save you. They hope in the christ who gave that baptism. And when you come to believe in jesus, You will not believe that your baptism saves you. You'll say jesus who gave me to be baptized before i could ever believe Is the one who gives me faith.

Who has given me the faith and surely, if he gave me the baptism and he gave me this, the the faith then i shall be saved. Circumcision, therefore is not a work. But a sign and a seal. Therefore abraham's true heirs. Are not those who are circumcised, but those who believe.

The rest of verse 11. So that he might be the father of all those who believe though, they are uncircumcised that righteousness, might be imputed to them. Also, This actually might have been shocking for a Jew to think about, but a gentile who had the sign first and came to faith later.

Actually, did it in the same order as father abraham? There's a way in which gentile believers then were better copies of Abraham. Than jewish believers. Because, He wasn't circumcised to when he believed. But he's not just the the father of those who have faith. Without circumcision. He's also obviously the father of the circumcised, he was the first one to be circumcised, but as circumcision enough in the answer is no.

Look at verse 12. And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision. But who also walk in the steps of the faith. Which our father abraham had. While still uncircumcised and the word steps. There is really the the word for footsteps. Um, Imagine if you will children.

We have a wonderful great big snow in tennessee. After five years experience, i know it happens every once in a long while. And dad takes the day off. And you and he have get all bundled up. And, And you've got matching boots and you got matching hats and matching gloves and matching snowsuits.

And you go outside and you see dad has built a snow palace on the hill. Now. Dad walks to the snow palace. And there you are, you're still at the house. Are you in the palace? Just because you have Matching boots. And hat. And gloves. And snow suit. No, you're not.

What do you have to do? To get to the palace. You have to walk. What the snow is too deep. You can't walk through that. Well. You can walk in dad's footsteps. Yeah, he walked normal. You have to take these giant leaping steps because you're a little one. But faith.

Now, the analogy breaks down because faith is not a walking. And faith is not a working. But if all you have is circumcision, if all you have is baptism, Then you're not yet, an heir with abraham. You don't yet, you haven't yet, come into the palace and that you haven't come into the blessedness of abraham.

Why? Because faith was how he came into blessing, the first place. Circumcision didn't bring him into the blessing. Baptism, doesn't bring you into the blessing. It's faith. That is the mechanism. Now, it's not my working or walking, it's counted for us. But a Jew who had merely been circumcised was not yet.

An error of Abraham. What jesus told the Jews. Who to whom he said, don't say we have abraham for our father, They'd been circumcised? Haven't they, what were they missing? That hadn't believed in jesus christ. So abraham's true heirs. Or co-airs our believers faith, without circumcision is enough. For more than a decade abraham had faith without circumcision.

And he was saved. But circumcision without faith is not enough. A circumcised Jew needed to become more like abraham was. When he was uncircumcised in chapter 15 in genesis, Finally. If circumcision was, The mechanism of blessingness. Then that accuses god of renegeing Of going back on his word. From chapter 15.

Look at verse 5 from genesis 15. Look at verse 15 of our passage. Sorry versus 14 15 of our passage for if those who are of the law are errors. Faith is made void. And the promise made of no effect. How good is the righteousness that faith can have?

If it can be taken away. Isn't that the dreadful place that? Um, Papists. Find themselves in or paper's doctrine would put you in or Wesleyan or minion doctrine, would put you in. Having a righteousness, that can be lost. Dear brothers and sisters, if you know your own heart. Well, you know, that if it's possible to lose righteousness, you will do it.

But the righteousness couldn't be lost. Even worse, not only is faith made void. But then the promise would be made of no effect. God, go back on his word. Two unthinkable horrors. And so, Circumcision didn't come in as a law to make people heirs. That came in as a sign and a seal.

Because the law he says, brings about wrath. For where there is no law. There is no transgression. If circumcision. Was a law if it was something by, which we earn. If it was a work. Then, as we said in the introduction, We wouldn't bring our Our children for for the sign.

Well enough to earn their salvation. We wouldn't believe well enough. The person is applying it is going to be a center. There are going to be things that are wrong in all of our minds and hearts. While it's done, Your baptism is not valid because of how correctly it was done.

Or how righteous and believing Either your parents were when they brought you were you were when you came if you were baptized as an adult or the minister was who applied it? No. If, if circumcision is a a law act to earn blessing, Then the only thing that it earns is not blessing, but wrath.

That's what sin does. With the law, it transgresses it. It breaks it. If circumcision is added as something to do to get blessed. Then it's just something by which We would, uh, we would deserve more wrath. So concluding application for us, Uh, A fair bit over, but Including application for us.

What makes you feel safe? With god. What makes you feel safe about the, the judgment that is coming. You will be there. What makes you feel safe from hell? Is it that you're a part of the church? Or a part of your family. Or that you've learned a bunch of the bible.

Or that you've been baptized or that you take the lord's supper. None of those things. None of those things. Make you safe with god. It's only jesus. Who makes you safe with god, and that's what faith does. It it's it doesn't even rest on itself. Faith receives christ. As he has offered in the gospel.

Faith counts, only jesus. As what makes it safe with god. What makes you safe with god? And so what this is telling us is that baptism is a wonderful blessing. It's a sign like circumcision was a sign. It's a seal just as circumcision was a seal. But it's not what makes me safe.

It's what tells me? That all who have jesus are safe. And if jesus, Has given you to trust in him. The same jesus. Who gave you baptism? Then surely you are safe. He gave me this faith. He gave me baptism, because That's something that's more tangible. He gave me the supper.

That's something that's more tangible. Is he faith? It grows. And sometimes we are weaker in faith and we slide backwards. But what faith always has? Is jesus. That's what baptism is for. To turn, you back to him. And assure you in him. Even as he's calling you. To repentance.