

FAITH AND UNBELIEF

ROMANS 4:21-24 • TV243A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, MARCH 31ST, 1985
by
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Transcribed, edited and published
DECEMBER 18TH, 2010

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
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Romans 4:21-24; *“Being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”*

If you have your Bible, I would like for you to turn to the **Book of Romans**. I am going to speak today on the subject: **“FAITH AND UNBELIEF.”**

Our Lord, after He had been crucified and risen from the tomb, before He ascended to the right hand of God, gathered His disciples about Him and said to them; *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not, (he that abides in unbelief), shall be damned.”*

In this passage that you have opened to (**Romans chapter 4**), the apostle Paul goes back and picks up the faith of Abraham to use for our example. Abraham was called the *“Father of the faithful.”* He was called the *“Friend of God.”* He was also called the *“Pattern of every believer.”*

Note what it says about Abraham in **Romans 4**, beginning with **verse 22-24;** *“Abraham believed God and it was counted (or imputed) to him for righteousness. Now; this was not written for*

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Abraham's sake alone but it was written for us, to whom this righteousness shall be imputed, if we believe on Him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead."

Note what it says about Abraham here beginning with **verse 22**, *"Abraham believed God and it was counted (or imputed) to him for righteousness. Now; this was not written for Abraham's sake alone but it was written for us, to whom this righteousness shall be imputed, if we believe on Him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead."*

This was not just written for Abraham's sake alone (that he believed God and it was imputed to him for holiness, righteousness, and justification). This is the message for us, if we believe on Him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Righteousness shall be imputed to us also.

The Jews asked our Lord in **John 6:28**; *"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?"* The Lord Jesus answered them and said; *"This is the work of God that you believe on Him whom He hath sent,"* that you believe on Christ.

This is the very work of God. You might be asking today, *"What should I do that I might work the works of God?"* This is the work of God, *"That you believe on Him, on the Lord Jesus whom God hath sent."*

You can wage religious battles where you wish and you can raise issues anywhere you desire, such as politics, prophecy, morals or methods. You can take whatever direction you choose to take. My friends; this is where the battle is fought. The question is belief or unbelief. The question is faith or unbelief; *"Do you believe on the Son of God?"*

John said at the conclusion of his book, in the Gospel of John (**John 20:31**), *"Now, these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and that believing you might have life through His name."*

In the Epistle of John (**1 John 5:13**), he says in the last part of this Epistle, *"These things have I written to you who believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

John 3:36 says, *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son of God (regardless of whatever else he believes, or does, or gives or knows), shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him."* Our Lord said, *"If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins."*

I have the issue today and this is the issue; this is that which concerns you the most, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned."* Faith is the foundation grace and faith brings all the blessings of God in justification, in redemption, in righteousness and sanctification.

Unbelief is the chief sin. Unbelief is the chief source of all sin. Unbelief shuts a man out of the Kingdom of God. This was the summary of Israel's whole problem. When they left Egypt and

journeyed across the wilderness and came to Kadesh and looked out over the Promise Land and sent the spies down into the land, they came back and said, *“We can’t take it.”*

Two of them said that they could take the land and the rest of them said that they couldn’t. They turned around and went back into the wilderness and there they wondered for 40 years. Out of all of the hundreds of thousands of men who left Egypt that were over 20 years of age, only two entered the Promise Land. God said this in the **Book of Hebrews**, *“They could not enter in because of unbelief.”*

It wasn’t particularly the calf (the golden idol) which they made that prevented them from entering. It wasn’t particularly their rebellion against Moses. It wasn’t particularly this, that, or some other thing. It wasn’t their complaining or murmuring; it was unbelief. That was the foundation sin; that was the chief sin, and because of unbelief they could not enter in.

Paul issues this warning to us, *“Therefore, take heed brethren, lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.”*

What are the causes of unbelief? Our Lord said, *“If you believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”* Israel could not enter into the Promise Land because of unbelief. Unbelief is the chief sin, it is the foundation of all sin.

What are the causes of unbelief? I can give you five reasons, especially, five chief causes of unbelief:

The first cause of belief, the first cause of all sin, (for that matter), is the fallen, corrupt, nature of men in our father Adam. It is a matter of the will being fallen. It is a matter of the will being in bondage. Our Lord said, *“You will not come to Me that you might have life. No man can come to me”* because of his fallen nature and his fallen will.

“The preaching of the cross to them who are perishing is foolishness.” Men love darkness. *“This is condemnation, that light has come into this world but men loved darkness rather than light.”* This is because of our fallen nature.

In **Romans 3** it says, *“There is none good. There is none righteous. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God.”* This is the cause of unbelief, chiefly and firstly, which is our fallen will, our fallen nature and our corrupt nature.

The Scripture says, *“In Adam all die.”* In Adam, *“Death, condemnation, and sin passed upon all men.”* Our nature is to love that which is evil and hate that which is good. That is why the Gospel does not appeal to the human heart; *“The natural man receiveth not the things of God; they are foolishness to him.”*

“The natural mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the Law of God and neither, indeed, can be. The whole head (the intellect) is sick,” God says, *“The whole heart is faint (this is talking*

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about the affections).” Our fallen wills have affected our affections and our intellect so that we cannot understand. The Gospel to us is a mystery because of this evil nature.

Here is the second cause of unbelief (another cause). Not only do we have a fallen will and nature, but there is satanic influence. Satan’s presence and power have been felt since the fall in the Garden of Eden.

The apostle Paul declares, *“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”* Satan, through his subtlety and craftiness deceived our mother Eve and tricked her. He led her into sin. Satan was the influence.

Paul says again, *“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”* So, another reason for unbelief and another cause of unbelief is satanic influence and satanic power.

The third cause for unbelief is ignorance. In **Romans 10:1-3**, Paul says; *“My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record; they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge, for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness are going about to establish a righteousness of their own.”*

They are ignorant of God’s purpose; they are ignorant of God’s holiness and are ignorant of God’s righteousness, especially, the fulfillment of that righteousness in our Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the **Book of Hosea**, the Lord says this; *“The people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge; they are ignorant. They have rejected knowledge and therefore I will reject them.”*

Another cause of unbelief is pride. Not only do we have a fallen nature, satanic influence and power which is exerted upon us. Not only is there the ignorance of the Word of God, the truth of God, the character of God, and the holiness of God, but also the cause of unbelief is pride.

What was it that led Adam to take the forbidden fruit? It was pride. Satan said, *“You will be as gods.”* So, this fruit appealed to Adam because it was *“desired to make one wise.”*

What was it that led Cain to reject the blood sacrifice and bring instead, a sacrifice of his own making, of his own merit? It was pride! What was it that has led men through the centuries to reject the free grace of God and turn to their own works? It was pride!

Ebenezer Erskine said this many years ago, *“The pride of men will do anything for salvation. The pride of men will do anything for life except believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, except be saved by grace alone. They will do anything rather than be saved by grace alone.”*

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They will give up their lands and families. They will put themselves in monasteries. They will lie on beds of thorns. They will live on nothing; they will fast until they are near death. They will read the creeds, read the Bible, count beads and pray to the virgin.

They will whip themselves and go on long pilgrimages to the Holy Land. They will do all this and more. They will do anything rather than take their places before God as sinners. But they will not sue for mercy through the righteousness and blood of the Son of God.

Pride leads a man to do anything you tell him to do except be saved by grace through faith through Christ alone. Pride will do anything except look to Christ.

I will give you another cause of unbelief (especially in our day). Another cause of unbelief is the security and the safety which is they feel in a false religious profession.

Yes sir; they cry, "*Peace, peace, when there is no peace.*" They talk about making peace with God when no peace has been made. You can't make peace with God without a Mediator. You can't make peace with God without a proper Substitute.

You can't make peace with God except through the Great High Priest that God has ordained, nor can you make peace with God without a blood sacrifice that is suitable to God. You can't make peace with God without God's Law being honored. You can't make peace with God without God's justice being satisfied.

Men today find comfort in an experience. They will take you to a time or take you to a place. They can take you to a meeting or they can take you to an altar. They can take you to a decision. They find comfort in a false profession of faith. They find comfort in a ceremony and baptism. They find comfort in church membership.

If it were not for these things, then they would be able to admit that their hearts are empty. They would be ready to admit that their souls are troubled. They would be ready to admit that God is mostly unknown, but they rest in those false professions.

They rest in the old country church experience. They rest in their denomination which they have been in all their lives, to which their fathers and mothers were absolutely devoted.

They will rest in memorizing a verse of Scripture or shaking a leading preacher's hand, or having some sort of feeling. They will rest in anything except Christ. The Scripture says, "*Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid in Christ the Lord.*" *There is none other name in heaven given among men, whereby, we must be saved. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. I am God and there is none else.*"

Why is unbelief such a great crime? Why is the wrath of God against unbelief? Why does God say, "*If you believe not that I am He; you will die in your sins?*" Why does He say, "*He that believeth not shall be damned?*"

Why does He say, *“He that believeth not the wrath of God abideth on him?”* I will tell you why, unbelief is a great crime because it insults the blessed Trinity. It despises the great love of the Father which gave His only begotten Son to be our Redeemer and our Sacrifice and Substitute.

“For God so loved, He gave His only begotten Son.” When He gave Him and when He came, we cried; *“Crucify Him; we will not have this man reign over us.”* It makes light of the sufferings and sacrifice of the Son of God.

To the unbeliever, the cross is foolishness. To the unbeliever, the blood was wasted time. To the unbeliever, the Gospel of Jesus Christ means nothing. It makes void the office of the Holy Spirit who came to reveal Christ, who came to convict men of sin, who came to bring men to that faith that saves. So, unbelief is a great crime because it despises the blessed Trinity.

Unbelief is a great crime because it slanders the character of God. Listen to **1 John 5:10**; *“He that believeth not God hath made God a liar because he believeth not the record that God hath given of His only begotten Son.”*

“God is a liar;” that is what unbelievers say. They say, “I cannot accept God’s Word. I cannot accept the record that God has given of Christ. I will not believe it; therefore God must be a liar. I won’t take the place as a liar; I will give the lie to God.” The Bible says, *“Let God be true and every man a liar.”*

Thirdly: Unbelief would defeat the great purpose of God to honor and exalt His Son. What is the great purpose of God? What is God’s great design in redemption? Do you know what it is?

In **Philippians 2** it tells us; *“He hath highly exalted Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven, earth, and under the earth and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

The Father said, *“Christ has all preeminence.”* The Father said, *“He hath committed all things into the hands of the Son and every tongue is going to confess Him and every knee is going to bow and every person is going to own that He is Lord.”*

Unbelief says, “I won’t have it to be so; I just won’t have it; I will defeat the purpose of God. I will make void the great design of redemption.”

“God chose a people to be like Christ.” You say, “I refuse to have a part in it.”

God ordained Christ to be their Surety and their Saviour. You say, “I refuse to believe on His name in that office.”

God has satisfied and honored every attribute in Christ but you want to have it another way.

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God has declared that *“He is the way, the truth, and the life.”* Unbelief will not have it to be so. Again, you say; *“We will not have this man to reign over us.”*

We will take the reign of an earthly priesthood. We will take the reign of denominational leaders. We will take the power and reign of local, church elders. We will take the reign of a denomination and we will take the ruler ship of anything, even our own wills over our lives.

We will not bow to Christ. Unbelief is a great sin and it is a great crime. Unbelief will damn your soul. Listen to the text again; *“Abraham was called the friend of God.”* God spoke with him face to face as a man speaks with a friend.

Abraham is called *“The father of many nations.”* Abraham is called *“The pattern of the children of God.”* That is what it says in **Galatians 3**; *“Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham for ye are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.”*

That is how Abraham was declared righteous, holy, and accepted before God: *“Abraham believed God and it was counted (or imputed) to him, for righteousness (for holiness, and sanctification).”*

“This was not written for Abraham’s sake alone.” It is still the same way and it hasn’t changed. This is the ancient Gospel. This is the ancient message. *“This is the Gospel which He promised before by His prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”* This is not a new Gospel; this is the Gospel that God preached to Adam; *“The virgin’s Son shall bruise or destroy the head of the serpent.”*

This is the Gospel that God preached to Abraham on Mount Mariah when he put the ram in the place of Isaac.

This is the Gospel that God preached to Moses and Israel when Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

This is the Gospel taught Israel when Moses smote the rock in the wilderness; that Rock was Christ.

This is the Gospel God taught Israel in the wilderness when He gave them the Tabernacle, the Atonement, and the sin-offering.

This is the Gospel all the way through the Scriptures that hasn’t changed; it is the same. What more can I tell you?

This Gospel is the Gospel that we go forth preaching. It is the Gospel that our Lord gave us and sent us to preach to every creature. *“He that believeth;”* go preach this Gospel, the good news, the glad tidings, the declaration of the mercy of God through the great Prophet, Priest, and King, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Preach this Gospel; *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”*

Now; I ask you, have you seen the glory and holiness of God? The Gospel will mean nothing to you. This good news will not be good news if you have not seen the holiness and glory of God.

When Isaiah (in **Isaiah 6**), *“Saw the Lord, High, and lifted up. His train filled the temple. The seraphim’s about the throne cried; Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of Hosts. Isaiah said, “I saw the Lord and I cried; I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips. I am cut off; I am undone for mine eyes have the seen the Lord.”*

That is what leads a man to appreciate the Gospel, when he sees the immaculate, infinite, and holiness of God.

The second question that I am asking is this; have you seen the sinfulness and corruption of your flesh? That is what led David in **Psalms 51** to plead for mercy. David said, *“Lord; my sins are ever before me. Have mercy upon me. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow.”*

It is not sin against men. David said, *“Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned.”* It is not sins against men that bother us, it is our sins against God. *“We have sinned and come short of His glory.”*

Have you seen the awful corruption of your flesh in the eyes of God, before the immaculate, throne of God?

Thirdly: Have you seen the perfect life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ? The Gospel can be summed up in two words, substitution and satisfaction. All that the Law required of us Christ has fulfilled and obeyed. All that the Law, which is the very character of God (the holy Law of God, the eternal Law of God, the Commandments of God), Christ fulfilled and obeyed in the flesh and on the earth as our Substitute. He was *“numbered with the transgressors,”* He was our Substitute.

All that the justice of God, the wrath of God, the infinite righteousness of God demanded of us, Christ met on that cross and paid it in full:

**“Jesus paid it all
All the debt I owe,
Sin has left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow.”**

Have you seen the holiness of God? Have you seen the corruption, the pollution and the inability of the human flesh? Have you seen Christ in His perfect Righteousness, in His perfect life, *“Tempted as we are, yet without sin?”*

Have you seen Christ in His death of substitution and satisfying all which God required? Have you seen it?

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Here is the next question: Have you believed?

I'm not asking you to write to me, come to me, or contact me. I want you to contact Him. Look to Christ; believe on Him. Sue for mercy where mercy is given. Cry for faith before the throne of grace where faith is given. God is the Saviour; "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" Have you believed?

Paul summed it up this way by saying; "*I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.*" I have committed all unto Christ, have you?