

Romans 4

4 What shall we say then that ***Abraham our father***, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? **2** For **if** Abraham were **justified by works**, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. **3** For what **saith the scripture? Abraham believed God**, and **it (believing God)** was counted (imputed) unto him for righteousness. **4** Now to him that **worketh** is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of **debt**. **5** But to him that **worketh not, but believeth** on him that **justifieth the ungodly**, his **faith** (not works) is counted (imputed) for righteousness.

6 *Even as David* also **describeth** the blessedness of the man, unto whom God **imputeth (counted) righteousness without works**, **7** Saying, **Blessed** are they whose **iniquities are forgiven**, and **whose sins are covered**. (Psalm 32:1-2) **8 Blessed** is the man to whom the Lord will **not impute sin**.

9 Cometh this **blessedness** then upon the **circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?** for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. (we all agree upon this) **10 How was it then reckoned? (how do you reconcile this?)** when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.(!!)

11 And he received the **sign** of circumcision, **a seal** of the **righteousness of the faith** which he had yet being **uncircumcised**: that he might be the father of all them **that believe**, though they be not circumcised; that **righteousness might be imputed unto them also**:

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also **walk in the steps of that faith** of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. (Father Abraham had many sons...) **13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, **but through the righteousness of faith**.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: **15** Because the **law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression**. **16 *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace***; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Review

Adam's sin was IMPUTED to all mankind

Romans 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death PASSED UPON ALL MEN, (Adam's sin was IMPUTED to all mankind) for that all have sinned.*

1Cor 15.22 *"For as IN ADAM all die..."*

Ever since Adam sinned in the garden, man has been born with a SIN NATURE... his sin was **IMPUTED** to all mankind

Man's sin was IMPUTED to Christ

Isaiah 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath LAID ON HIM the iniquity of us all.*

2 Cor. 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Christ's righteousness is IMPUTED to man

Philip. 3:9 *"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"*

Romans 3:22 *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe"*

Romans 10:3 *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

1 Cor 1.30 Christ is our righteousness

EXPLANATION: When we were born we were born w/Adam's sin nature IMPUTED to us...at the Cross our sin was IMPUTED to Christ...at salvation Christ's righteousness is IMPUTED to my record 'Not only do I no longer have a sin record I now have a record of Christ's righteousness

vs 6 of our text *"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God IMPUTETH RIGHTEOUSNESS without works."*

Justification means that righteousness has been IMPUTED to my account. It has changed my position with God.

Review from last week

- This is not a new plan of salvation Romans 4:1
- Paul goes back to the story of Abraham to help them understand salvation by grace through faith
- God justifies the ungodly!
- And how is it that we who have sinned and **insulted God's glory** so badly can be saved from the sentence of condemnation that we deserve from God?
Romans 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

- The gospel saves because it is the good news that God's righteousness is revealed to be received by faith. Now what does that mean? How does that work? That's where we are in Romans right now.

Introduction to Sermon

- Story of Jim trying to explain Grace to his driver.
- Story of Joe Nicosen's sister funeral.
- Illustration: I look prepared to run a 5k until I am asked to do so. The running of the 5K reveals something in my life that is true. I am the worlds smallest fat man.
- Today we see the children of Israel learn something about Father Abraham. It had great implications on them in that day and great implications in your life today.

Main Point: We can only be made righteousness by Christ imputing His righteousness unto our account. No one has or ever will receive it any other way! Not Abraham or your grandmother!

I. Let's Call Abraham to the Stand

A. Why did Paul choose to discuss the life of Abraham?

1. And it is an apt choice because Abraham was basically the man whom the - - Jews were using as their proof of justification by law, be legalism.

a) They thought having them as their father would merit them salvation or give them a headstart on the competition. **John the Baptist** Matt. 3:7-12

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, **We have Abraham to our father:** for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

b) Jesus often would refer to Abraham to illustrate what was necessary to enter into Heaven. Matt. 8:10-12

10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall **sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.** **12** But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

c) Jesus shocked everyone in Luke 16 with the Rich Man and Lazarus

d) They were very proud to be Abrahams offspring. John 8

2. Abraham's life demonstrates how good works, religious rituals, or the law is not able to make a man righteous.
 - a) He doesn't get circumcised for about **13 years** after he is declared righteous.
 - b) His life was not filled with good works but it was better than most and that has no impact on God choosing him for service.
 - c) He lives 430 years before the law. Gal

B. Why was David brought into this story?

1. It is powerful to see that David understood about Abraham what Paul was preaching. (A Paul Harvey - the rest of the story).
2. David after the law was given.
3. They both testified of being forgiven by God's grace.
4. The best part and the only part that really matters about the testimony of Abraham and David are true of our testimonies today of we truly are believers!!

C. We always are looking for confirmation from others that what we are doing is right.

1. The Jewish people looked to Father Abraham.
 - a) They knew if anyone was righteous it was him.
 - b) "The footsteps a child follows are most likely to be the ones his parents thought they covered up." Anonymous
 - c) They thought his goodness carried over to their account today. They thought they had inherited righteousness.
2. Unbeliever, who is it that you are looking at today?
 - a) You may be looking to people who have been made righteous, but the wrong aspect of their life.
 - b) You may be looking to the wrong people.
3. Believer, what are you drawing peoples attention to in your life.
 - a) Does your life show a mark difference than that of a believer?
 - b) Are you pointing people to the fact you were in a sinner who had not rights in God's presence, but in His grace He saved you!

II. The Motive is Questioned

A. God didn't make Abraham righteous because of his GOOD WORKS? (v.4,5)

1. Pharisees, the Older Brother in the prodigal story, and moral Americans have a problem with grace. Matt. 12
 - a) We should get rewarded based upon our performance.
 - b) Whatever I get is a result of my hard work.
 - c) Anyone who has worked less than me has not worked enough.
2. Problem with payment by works option.
 - a) Doesn't pay for past sins.
 - b) Fallen creatures can't meet the required standard of perfection required for the payment of sin. **Romans 3:23**
 - c) The death of Christ on the cross was pointless and a pathetic attempt by our God to merit our attention.
 - d) God would have to share His glory.

B. God didn't make Abraham righteous because of his adherence to RELIGIOUS RITUALS. (v.9,10,11)

1. Abraham was made righteous before the circumcision. Gen. 15:6
And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.
 - a) He is circumcised until Gen 17:24
And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.
 - b) That is 13 years later!
 - c) Circumcision was a **SIGN** or a **SEAL** of righteous FAITH. **v.11**
2. The symbols and works around the tabernacle could not do the job. **Heb 8:5-7**
 - 5** *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*
 - 6** *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*
 - 7** *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*
 - a) His death made atonement for the sins of the Old and New Covenant. **Heb 8:15**
 - b) I thought that was paid for? No, sir. The animal sacrifices had not power to cleanse but only point to Christ!

c) Sins are now PUT AWAY. Hebrews 9:26

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

C. God didn't make Abraham righteous because of his fulfilling of the LAW. (v. 13,14,15)

1. Simple Math

- a) This is a difficult theology issue that can be solved with simple math.
- b) Abraham (in the Bible) was born about 2015 BC (calculated from Genesis 11:26 etc) He died in about 1840 BC. (Gen 25:7-10) Moses was born about 1590 BC (Ex 6:16, 18, 20; 2:7 etc) and died when he was 120 years old (Deuteronomy 34:7). So, between the death of Abraham and the birth of Moses there was about 250 years. Abraham is 85 years in Gen 15 when he is made righteous.
- c) LOOK TO THE BACK OF THE BOOK; **ANSWER: 430 years** Galatians 3:17 does the math for us.

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

2. David brought in as a character witness

- a) **I object.** Now that we have the LAW we must be saved by the LAW
- b) David knew his position. Psalm 32:1-2
- c) Knew the blessing of being able to enter in His presence. **Psalm 84:3**
3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.
(1) Sparrow was of no value.
(2) Swallow represents the restless.
- d) How do you define and use the word bless? What about the people around you? -- Illustration: CJ at Rite "have a blessed day"

III. We are called to the bench

A. "Bench" in legal contexts means simply the location in a courtroom where a judge sits.

B. We learn that the system doesn't work as we thought it did.

C. We learn what was most important about the life of Abraham.

1. It was not his behavior which we were trying to mimic.

2. It is his belief.

a) He did not believe in his good works, religious rituals, or the law.

b) Abraham is a believer

c) Someone has said that Abraham believed God when he did not know where (Heb. 11:8), when he did not know how (11:11), and when he did not know why (11:17–19).

(1) Believed for a city.

(2) Believed for a son.

(3) Believed for a redeemer.

(a) Died without seeing the promise. **Heb 11:13**

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

(b) **Heb. 11:19** Believed in God's power over death.

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

(c) **John 8:56** Rejoiced to see this day!

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, & was glad.

(d) He longed for me when I was absent, you despise me when I am present

(e) Likely he knew the significance of Gen 3:15

D. It is by FAITH so that it can be by GRACE! (v.16)

1. And until you face the reality of your ungodliness and your incapacity, you're irredeemable.

2. **You see, it is not the worst sinner who loses heaven, it is the one who thinks himself the least sinner who loses heaven.**

Closing Story

Felix Jardeo was 60-years-old; He lived in the Philippines, way out where nobody else lived. He farmed a simple little farm. And he saved his money for years to buy an ox to help him plow. He finally saved enough money and he went out to look for an ox to buy. You know what he found? That all of the money he had saved was worthless because the government of the Philippines had ordered that all Philippine paper money be exchanged for the new currency called "Bogon Lipanon" and all savings stashed up in the old currency after a certain date was useless. And so, in 1975 he had a little schoolboy write a letter for him because he couldn't read or write and the little boy wrote to the President. And he said, "After all, Mr. Jardeo is only poor and he doesn't read and he doesn't write and he's just an ignorant rice farmer, can't you please let his money be good?"

He got a letter back. It said this: "The law must be followed because the deadline for exchanging bills has already passed. The government can no longer change your bills with the new ones; even the President of the Philippines is not exempt from this rule." But, the letter didn't end there. It added this: "However, because I believe that you really worked -hard to save this money, I am changing your-money for new money from my own personal funds and now you'll be able to buy your **ox.**" And the letter was signed, "Your friend, Ferdinand Marcos, President of the Philippines." The man had no right; the President gave him out of his own funds.

Conclusion

You're in that same position and so am I. All the stuff we've been piling up all our life that we expect to walk in and purchase our redemption is useless.

Will you recognize your currency of GOOD WORKS, RELIGIOUS RITUALS, and FOLLOWING THE LAW is not an out dated form of payment.. but it never has been an acceptable payment for sins!

Throw yourself before the mercy of the Judge and ask Him for mercy. He will freely give it to you as he did Abraham. Not of works but of faith. For His glory!

Christian: Point everyone that is looking to you and your morality to your savior and how meaningless your goodness was in receiving the imputed righteousness of God!