

Subject: *The Ingredients of Saving Faith*

Scripture: *Romans 4:9-25*

So far in the Book of Romans we have learned that all people are sinners who are not right with God. We have learned God gave His Son Jesus to die for sinners and make a way for us to be right (justified) with God. We have learned that we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone.

Now in Romans 4 Paul presents Abraham as an illustration of a person is justified or made right with God. This is the basic flow of chapter 4.

1. Abraham was justified by faith alone, not by works.
2. Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted (credited) to him for righteousness.
3. David also believed God and was counted righteous.
God did not hold sin against him.
4. Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether Jew (circumcised) or Gentile (uncircumcised).
5. Abraham received righteousness by faith before he was circumcised.
His circumcision was just a seal or sign of the righteous standing he had before God, nothing more.
6. God's promise to Abraham and his spiritual descendents (all true believers) rested on righteousness received by faith.
7. Abraham's faith illustrates God's method of justifying all sinners by faith.

In Romans 4 the emphasis is on Abraham's faith and how his faith demonstrates the faith of all God's people. Abraham's faith is the prototype of all true saving faith. The words *believe* or *faith* is found in verse 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 24.

With so many references we should see the importance of faith in our salvation. The problem is that faith has all but lost its distinctive meaning and application. Everybody who has ever heard about Jesus thinks of himself as a believer. Just as someone says "I believe in George Washington" or "I believe in Abraham Lincoln," people think that faith is believing the fact that Jesus lived, that He died on the cross and rose again from the dead, and nothing more.

Others think of faith as positive thinking or being spiritual or religious. Faith is something that sets them apart from an atheist. At least they believe in God. How often we hear someone referred to as a man of faith or woman of faith. Faith in what? Faith in who? What kind of faith?

The pivotal verse is Romans 4:3 in which Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6.

Romans 4:3 *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* It is important for us to look at that verse in its context.

Genesis 15:1-6

In Romans 4 we find...

Seven Ingredients of Saving Faith

A. **Saving faith is personal trust in the living God (vs. 17)**

He is the God who raises the dead. Abraham knew something about that when God told him sacrifice his son, Isaac (Gen. 22).

Hebrews 11:17-19¹⁷ *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,*¹⁸ *Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:*¹⁹ *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

B. **Saving faith is based on God's Word (vs. 18)**

We can't have faith until God first speaks. God has spoken in His Word. Faith is our saying "Amen" to what God has said.

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

C. **Saving faith trusts God in spite of obstacles and appearances (vs. 19-20)**

God made a promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham had no children at that time, and he was way beyond the age to have children, but he believed God anyway.

D. **Saving faith gives glory to God (vs. 20)**

Faith shows that we believe God is trustworthy. God honors faith because faith honors God.

Hebrews 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

E. **Saving faith rests in God's ability and faithfulness (vs. 21)**

God said it and Abraham believed it. He was fully persuaded that God would follow through on His promise. Abraham put His trust in God's ability. Faith is not a gamble. We don't try God to see how things work out. We trust Him, period.

F. **Saving faith is imputed (credited) for righteousness (vs. 22)**

Faith is the means by which God credits us with the righteousness of Christ. Our faith is the channel. Our faith has no merit on its own. It's all by grace (vs. 16). Even our faith is a gift from God.

Ephesians 2:8-9⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*⁹ *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

G. Saving faith is trusting completely in Christ's death and resurrection (vs. 23-25)

Abraham didn't know what we know. He believed what God said to him at that time. We know God's entire plan fulfilled in Christ. Our salvation rests on Christ's death and resurrection alone. The resurrection proved that God accepted Christ's death on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. It showed that all people who trust in Christ are justified. Sins are fully paid and we are fully justified.

Saving faith is very simple, but it is absolutely essential. Do you have saving faith or some other kind?

Saving faith is...

- God-given

It is different from natural faith (the faith we use in normal daily activities like taking medicine or driving a car). Saving faith is supernatural gift from God.

- God-sustained

Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus reminded Peter, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." Genuine faith keeps on trusting God. This is the difference between saving faith and superficial faith. The faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first.

- Bible-based

Faith is our response to what God tells us in Scripture.

- Christ-centered

Saving faith is especially centered on the death and resurrection of Christ.

- Consistently repeated

Saving faith is the same regardless of the person, time, or place. It doesn't matter if the person was saved in the OT or NT, if they are Jew or Gentile, male or female, old or young, moral or immoral, all people are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

- Personally required

Abraham's faith is only a pattern. He shows us how to be right with God. Each one of us must put our faith in Christ.

Romans 4:3 *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*