

Romans Chapter 4

- In chapter 3 Paul introduced the doctrine of Grace, of justification by grace and not of works, he now continues to expound on justification by grace.
- Righteousness by faith eliminates any boasting on man's behalf, which Paul also addressed in Chapter 3.

Romans 3:27 “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

- My salvation, our salvation is a work of God. I can't boast in my own works, because my salvation is God's work in me, not my own.
- Paul uses both Abraham & David, both men who are beloved and revered in Judaism – as examples of God's grace.
- By using Abraham and David as examples, the assertion is made that this is not a new concept, but that it is and has been part of God's plan all along.

V: 1 This verse is translated in various ways. Context, he is speaking to the Jews.

KJV: “*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found.*” (Proper order)

NKJV: “What then shall we say that Abraham our father, has found according to the flesh?” (Wrong order)

NASB: “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?” (Proper order)

NIV: “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?”

CJB: “Then what should we say Avraham, our forefather, obtained by his own efforts?”

Literal Greet translation:

“*What say then - Abraham our father - as flesh - found?*”

- What did Abraham discover about faith and justification?

- The illustration will progress from “Abraham our father according to the flesh”, speaking of the Jews as his descendants to Abraham being our father according to the spirit – the critical ingredient being faith.

Galatians 3:7 “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”

V: 2 Hypothetically if Abraham was justified by works, then he could boast of having accomplished his own salvation. The truth is that God does all the justifying.

Romans 3:20 “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

1 Corinthians 1:29 “That no flesh should glory in His presence.”

- Could Abraham talk about how he left the Ur of the Chaldees, or how he survived the thing with Pharaoh, or the king of Shechem, or how he sacrificed his son Isaac – he couldn't boast – God is the one who called him, saved him, and gave him the power to do those things.
- All these things happened long before there was a law, there was no law during Abraham's time – it came much later.
- Even still the Law was and is limited in its power; it only has the power to convict or condemn, but not to save.
- The real issue here is that of who is going to get the glory?

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.”

- A real salvation experience; a genuine re-generation produces humility, not pride.

Luke 17:10 “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”

Galatians 6:14a “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

V: 3 What does the scripture say – quoting from **Genesis 15:6**.

Genesis 15:6 “And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

Galatians 3:6 Paul says the same thing.

- It was the believing, the trusting - that God accounted as righteousness.

Jesus taught:

John 6:28-29 “²⁸Then said they unto Him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work (singular) of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him,…”

- Glory for our salvation should always be given to God, yet our flesh always wants to take credit for at least part of it.
- We really want to believe that there is something good in us, some little part somewhere inside.

Paul addresses this in chapter 7

Romans 7:18a “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing:..”

- The real us is spiritual, when He redeems us, He is redeeming our spirit, not our flesh. The flesh is condemned to the cross – the flesh must die!

1 Corinthians 15:53 “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

- Why do you suppose that God established the principle of righteousness by faith? It's the only way that my relationship with Him can remain constant in spite of my human failures.
- The Mosaic Law was unable to deliver on righteousness because it depended on the performance of man. The Law didn't fail, man did, being un-able to fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law.
- God then established a new and different basis for righteousness; faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in the completed work of Jesus, trusting His performance - Jesus promised to cleanse a man from all sin and to present him faultless before the Father.
- This New Covenant is based on God's ability to fulfill the requirements of the Law, we simply need to trust in Him. Faith.

V: 4 When we work, either at religion or at a job – the work in itself creates a debt to the person being worked for – something is then owed to the worker.

- When we work for a wage, we put in 40 hours doing whatever, our employer is then indebted to pay us that wage.
- **Illustration:** Homeless men, cleaning windshields at intersections – then demanding payment.
- Jehovah's Witnesses mistakenly believe that by going door to door, or sitting out by the Post Office they are earning their righteousness, which is through the law.
- **God simply cannot be coerced into justification, into justifying us on our terms.**
- God won't be a debtor to any man.
- Grace: un-merited favor, free gift.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 11:6 “And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

- The two are mutually exclusive; it is either works or it is grace – and only one saves!

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

V: 5 We naturally want to work to earn or deserve our justification - but if we're willing to trust in Him for the same thing - then just like Abraham, our faith is accounted as righteousness.

- Trusting in the completed work of Jesus on the cross, trusting in His Word.

Psalms 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

- God justifies the un-godly - because there aren't any Godly to justify!
- **We're not saved by works, but once we are saved then working, serving the Lord becomes a natural by-product of salvation.**

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Balance:

James 2:17-20 “¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

- Our good works don't add one whit to our righteousness – they simply demonstrate our faith, they are a love response to our Savior.
- Love is the motivation; if it isn't then whatever we do is useless.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8a (*Turn to*)

V: 6-8 David received God's forgiveness for adultery, lying, conspiracy, and murder, for numbering the people, and for the every day sins of life.

Psalm 51:1-4 “¹Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”

Psalm 51:16-17 “¹⁶For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

- David trusted God, took God as His Word that he was in fact forgiven; as we should.

“^{6b}... *without works.*” Without burdens! Religion is so burdensome, so many hoops to jump through, religion is a cruel task master!

Psalm 32:1-2 “¹Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

- David makes a couple of very significant statements in this short passage:

1. God forgives sins and imputes righteousness apart from works.
2. God does not impute our sins. In other words, once we are justified, our record contains Christ's perfect righteousness *and can never again contain our sins*. Christians do sin, and these sins need to be forgiven if we are to have fellowship with God; *but these sins are not held against us.* (T/T 1 John 1:5–12)

- As David proclaims “Oh how happy is the man... whose transgression is forgiven...” He has a real appreciation of his own forgiveness.
- In many of David’s earlier Psalms as we’ve seen on Sunday mornings he described his righteousness, his innocence, that his hands were clean - but his later Psalms reflect just the opposite. He’s stumbled significantly multiple times and was brought to the conclusion that he was a sinner. Age and experience often work that way.
- The blessings of life aren’t necessarily in power, prosperity, or fame – the greatest blessing in life is in the forgiveness of God; and to think that we have not only the privilege of receiving it, but also the power to extend it!

Impute: (G3049) “Logizomai” – reckon, count, account - If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.

- If there is no iniquity, then there is no iniquity.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

- In this example what did David do to earn his forgiveness? He simply trusted in the Lord, by faith and accepted it.

1 John 1:8-9 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth (continually) us from all sin.”

- Paul is pointing out that David took God at His word, that he by faith believed he was forgiven, and he moved on and acted like it, taking hold of the promises of God.

V: 9 Is this just for the circumcised only – just for the Jews?

- Abraham was accounted righteous for his faith – the father of Judaism, so is it just for the Jews?
- Though circumcision was sacred to the Jews, Paul makes the case that salvation is based on faith – circumcision of the heart, not the physical ritual.

V: 10-11 Abraham was accounted righteous before God through faith (**Genesis 15:6**), before the covenant of circumcision (**Genesis 17:10**) and before the Law.

- For the purpose of being the father of all who believe, including the un-circumcised.
- If “ritual” circumcision doesn’t automatically afford righteousness, what about baptism, altar calls, communion? Nope.

V: 12 Abraham is the father in faith to those who walk in faith, regardless of their physical or genetic status.

- Father of those who walk in faith, just as he did prior to being circumcised.

Galatians 3:7 “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”

V: 13 God’s promise to Abraham didn’t come through the Law, the Law didn’t come until 430+ years after Abraham in the time of Moses.

- Abraham’s righteousness was thereby apart from the Law since the Law didn’t even exist then.
- Abraham’s righteousness was by faith, the righteousness of faith, not of the Law.
- God kept things clear so that it wouldn’t be misconstrued.

V: 14 If we could be justified by the Law, then there would be no place for faith, it would nullify God’s promises.

Galatians 3:18 “For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

V: 15 The Law can only produce wrath & judgment: The Law was’t given to save men, it was given to show men that they needed to be saved.

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”

Galatians 3:24 “Wherefore the law was our school master / tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

- A man cannot transgress a law that doesn't exist.
- They don't issue speeding tickets on the Audubon in Germany because there is no speed limit.

V: 16 It, our righteousness is by faith, that it might be by His grace, not our works, not the Law – all that it & we might be secure.

- Salvation must be by faith. If it were by works, we would always wonder if we were really saved.
- Because of our failures, we would continually want to get saved again, or baptized again - we would be feeling inadequate and unworthy, never knowing if we were really saved or not - because our performance fluctuates continually.
- There is no security in our own performance, only in His.

1 Kings 18:26-39 The strenuous efforts of the prophets of Baal came to nothing, but the simple prayer of Elijah was very effective.

- Abraham isn't our father in the ethnic or ancestral sense, but in the spiritual sense. He's the father of all who believe in Jesus, and they are accounted righteous by their faith in Christ.
- The fact that Abraham was justified by grace and not Law proves that salvation is for all men.

V: 17 Quoting from **Genesis 17:5** where God changed Abram's name to Abraham (father of many nations) adding the "H", the "Ruach" or the very breath of God.

"... even God, who quickened the dead...."

- From a reproductive stand point they were both dead. This could also be a reference to God being able to raise Abraham's son Isaac from the dead after his having sacrificed him upon the altar.

Isaiah 46:9-10 *"⁹Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, ¹⁰declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure."*

- Long before Abraham fathered Isaac, God spoke to Abraham about his son as though he already existed.

- In the same way as God talks about us as being righteous, justified, glorified, holy, pure, and sanctified completely.
- God can talk about these things in the present tense before they've come to pass, because He alone knows the future, He knows what's been accomplished - He knows that it will be, so He talks about it as if it already was.

Jude 24 “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

We come now to the 4 keys of Abraham's faith.

V:18-19 ¹Abraham ignored the physical impossibilities before him and instead, believed God's promises.

- Contrary to hope: both Abraham who is 100 years old & Sarah's bodies were past the season of life where conceiving a child would be a reasonable expectation.
- God goes beyond any and all of our reasonable expectations.

Mark 7:37 “And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

- We should fight the urge to limit God – think / pray big!

“^{18b}... according to that which was spoken...”

- ¹⁹Weak in faith vs: strong in faith.

Romans 10:17 “So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

2 Kings 7:1-20

- The Syrians besieged the city of Samaria.
- All their supplies were cut off, their condition became hopeless.
- The people were starving to death, resorted to cannibalism, eating their own children.
- A donkey's head sold for 80 shekels of silver (2 lbs.)
- The King and his officer visited the home of Elisha.
- The prophet promised a complete reversal of the circumstances.
- He said tomorrow at this time – food will be plentiful and cheap.

- The king's officer said "Elisha, even if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?"
- Elisha replied "Behold, you will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat it."
- It all seemed too impossible to even consider – the dis-believing attitude.
- 4 lepers decided to surrender to the Syrians, but found their camp empty – with all it's provision intact.

2 Kings 7:6 "For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses – the noise of a great army...."

- So they fled
- The king's officer saw the plunder, but was trampled to death in the stampede for food.

V: 20a ²Abraham did not waiver in unbelief at the promises of God.

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him..."

- God had promised that Abraham's descendants would be like the stars in the sky, and the sand on the sea shore, through Isaac.

2 Peter 1:4a "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises:"

2 Corinthians 1:20 "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." (God keeps His Word)

- Abraham knew that God would and could do it, even through the death of his son.

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

- God has made many promises that we can count on, like Abraham we can and should be confident.

V:20b ³Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

- Abraham was thanking and praising God before Sarah was even pregnant!

Philippians 4:6 "Be careful / anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God."

V: 21 ⁴Abraham was fully convinced that what God had promised, He was able to perform.

Ephesians 3:20 "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

- How big is our God?

Isaiah 40:12, 15 “¹²Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” -
“¹⁵Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing.”

- Is our God able, or not?
- Abraham believed that God could do it? What? You name it!

Genesis 22 – Abraham offers up Isaac, in obedience to God's command.

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

2 Peter 1:18-19 “¹⁸And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. ¹⁹We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts;”

- We can believe God's word more readily than we can believe our own eyes.

V: 22 Because of his faith, not wavering, it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Galatians 3:6 “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

V: 23-24 This wasn't recorded just to bless Abraham, but for all our benefit. We enter into God's righteousness the same way – through faith!

V: 25 Jesus died for our sins, and was resurrected that we might have life everlasting.

- The latter is the result of the former.
- His death paid for our sins, His resurrection has given us life.
- Had Christ remained in the tomb, there would have been no justification. His resurrection bears witness to that.

Romans 10:9-10 “⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be

saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Ref.Romans.04