

Abraham, the Friend of God

Sin – *missing the mark*

Faith – *a continuous looking away unto the finished work of Christ*

Justification – *The sinner who believes in Christ receives God's gift of righteousness, which then enables God to pronounce him righteous—declared of worth.*

Redemption – *release on payment of ransom*

Propitiation – *the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift, thus restoring the love of the wronged.*

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v.27-31 – Paul now concludes the chapter with three basic questions to show us the natural result of God's merciful acceptance of us through faith in Jesus.

1. Who can boast?

- No one.
- How can you boast when you've received the gift of grace without any merit on your part?
- All ground for self-righteousness is wiped out.
- No "us" and "them."
- All boasting is silenced.

2. Is God the God of Jews or Gentiles?

- All mankind is equal before Him.
- All are of sin and no one is excluded from grace.
- No one can stand on any other basis than the work of Jesus Christ on his/her behalf.

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v.27-31 – Paul now concludes the chapter with three basic questions to show us the natural result of God's merciful acceptance of us through faith in Jesus.

3. Does faith then cancel out the Law?

- No, faith in Jesus fulfills the Law
- The righteousness which the Law demands is the same righteousness that is given to us in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21)
- Since we have the righteousness from God as a gift, then we no longer need to fear the Law, because its demands—nothing less than absolute perfection—have been met through Christ.

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- I. Righteousness Needed Because of Sin and Condemnation
 - A. The Condemnation of the Pre-Christian (1:18-32)
 1. The Cause of Condemnation: willful ignorance (1:18-23)
 2. The Consequence of Condemnation: divine abandonment (1:24-32)
 - B. The Condemnation of the Moral PC (2:1-11)
 - C. The Condemnation of the Unenlightened PC (2:12-16)
 - D. The Condemnation of the Jew (*religious churchgoer*) (2:17-3:8)
 1. They did not keep the law of God (2:17-29)
 2. They did not believe the promises of God (3:1-8)
 - E. The Condemnation of **All** Mankind (3:9-20)
- II. Righteousness Imputed; Justification (Rom. 3:21-5:21)
 - A. The Description of Righteousness (3:21-31)
 - B. The Illustration of Righteousness: Abraham (4:1-25)
 1. Faith is apart from works (4:1-8)
 2. Faith is apart from rituals—circumcision (4:9-12)
 3. Faith has God as its Object (4:16-25)

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Chapter 4: Abraham, the man of faith.

- Paul is going to spend an entire chapter on the vital role faith plays in our relationship with God.

• Paul answers two questions concerning the nature of faith through the life of Abraham.

- *When* was Abraham made righteous?
- *Why* was Abraham made righteous?

• v. 1-3 Abraham could have chosen two ways to gain a sense of worth and right standing before God.

1. Works.

- If so, he has something to boast about (but not before God)
- Righteousness which comes from performance is worthless

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2. Believing God.

- Not just believing *in* God, but *believing* God.

• Paul then turns to the OT to prove this:

- *Gen. 15:5-6* "descendants"
- *Gen. 22:16-18* "seed"
- *Gal. 3:16-18* – Paul tells us the importance and significance of this.

- "So shall your offspring be"

- Not "multitude of offspring" (plural)
- But "one offspring" (singular)

- And through Him would come a multitude of spiritual descendants – having the same faith as Abraham

- *John 8:56-59*

- *John 12:24*

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v.4-5 – “but to the one who does not work”

- if you have worked, then you have earned your wages.
- Wages are not a gift, but an obligation that must be paid.
- One cannot take credit for a free gift
- We do not work *for* our worth, but we do work *from* our worth.

v.6-8 – through Ps. 51, Paul uses David to confirm, from the negative, it’s not what you do for God, it’s what you do with God.

- “the man whose sin”
- Who is “the man?” – the person who is “in Christ”

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When was Abraham made righteous?

- When he believed God and His promise of the One who was to come, the One who would die for the sins of the world.

Why was Abraham made righteous?

• **v.9-12** Faith is apart from circumcision.

1. Rituals are powerless to save.
 - Abraham was circumcised *many years after* he was pronounced righteous by faith.
 - Baptism
 - Church attendance
 - Dress code, etc...
2. Circumcision’s purpose was twofold:

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1. **Sign** – never overlooked
2. **Seal** – cannot be undone
 - A seal is a sign of permanency. (*Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22*)
 - “You have been accepted by Me, and that acceptance will never change” (*John 18:9*)

- Why? **v.12** – To make him the Father of a new humanity, living by faith.

• **v.13-15** Faith is apart from Law

- The Law Brings Wrath (giving them over)
- God does not accept us on the basis of doing are best – obeying the law.

1. Abraham’s faith was apart from the law also.
 - The promise was given long before the Law (Moses)
 - Righteousness clearly did not come from the Law.

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2. The Law renders the promise worthless.

- The Law demanded perfection
- We could never have followed the law perfectly and thus could never have received worth.

– **v.16-17** Paul next tells us *two things* that faith does:

1. It makes the promise of worth real.
2. Faith introduces the principle of grace.
 - Law and grace do not cancel each other out.
 - What then is the purpose of the law today?
 - The Law draws you to the grace of God.
 - I can’t do it of myself. Thank you for doing the work on my behalf.

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v.17-20 The Heart of Romans 4

- Paul explains faith in 3D
 1. The Object of faith. (God)
 - Abraham believed *God*
 - The power of your faith depends upon the object in which your faith is placed
 - The amount of faith has nothing to do with it.
 - The question isn’t how big is your faith, but how big is your God?
 2. The obstacles of faith—unbelief (Satan)
 - Hopeless circumstances
 - “he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead”
 - How are you doing in this? (*Gal. 2:20*)

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3. The objective of faith (Man)

- As we remain focused on the Object and overcome the obstacles, we attain the objective.
- The objective of faith is maturity and growth
 - *James 1:2-4*

v.21-22 “being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”

- Faith is not unsupported, irrational hope, but the grounding of our lives in the truth about God.
- Abraham was grounded in the truth.
- He was fully persuaded.

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Hebrews 4:2 – the great warning.

Hebrews 11:6 – without faith, it is impossible to please God.

James 2:23 – do you want to be known as “the friend of God?”

v.23-25 Paul argues that Abraham’s faith was not extraordinary, but ordinary. (*Matt 17:20*)

When were *you* made righteous?

Why were *you* made righteous?

Do you just *believe in God*, or do you *believe God*?

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