

Abraham Justified by Faith (*Part 1*)

Romans 4:1-15

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: Like Abraham, we do not have to work to earn a right standing before God; we must simply accept His gracious gift of righteousness by faith alone.

Theme: Righteousness

Definition: Righteousness is a right standing and a right relationship with God

Title: Romans—*The Road to Righteousness*

Summary: Paul explains how we may obtain righteousness before God (chapters. 1-11) and what the practical expressions of righteousness should look like in our daily lives (chapters. 12-16)

Paraphrase: How do we get saved and what should our lives look like once we are saved?

Outline: 1:1-17 – Introduction
1:18-3:20 – Why Righteousness is Needed
3:21-8:39 – How Righteousness is Obtained
Chpts. 9–11 – When Righteousness is Rejected
Chapters. 12–16 – How Righteousness is Practiced

Romans 3:21-31 – God has graciously provided righteousness for us at no cost to ourselves.

- Verse 22 – This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
- Verse 24 – We are justified freely (declared not guilty by God) by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- Salvation is a free gift from God made possible by Christ's sacrifice on the cross; His death is the all-sufficient payment for the penalty of all our sins.
- His atoning sacrifice on the cross satisfies the just demands of God's holiness that sin be punished by death.
- When we put our faith in Jesus Christ to be our Savior, we are saved forever from the penalty of our sins by the grace of God!
- Verse 28 – For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. The Jews were trusting in:
 - Their ethnic relationship to Abraham
 - Their circumcision, the sign of the covenant relationship between themselves and God
 - The fact that they had received the Mosaic Law directly from God
 - Their diligent observance of the Law

Romans 4 – Paul seeks to prove his assertion that a man is justified by faith apart from works

- Vss. 1-8 – Abraham was not Justified by Works
- Vss. 9-12 – Abraham was not Justified by Circumcision
- Vss. 13-15 – Abraham was not Justified by the Law
- Vss. 16-25 – Abraham was Justified by Grace alone through Faith alone Apart from Works

I. Abraham Was not Justified by Works (4:1-8)

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?

2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God.

- If Abraham was depending on his good works to save him, what might he point to as his “ticket to heaven”?
 - Hebrews 11:8-12
 - His willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice
- If anyone could earn salvation by their good works, it would have been Abraham!
 - Abraham’s good works flowed out of his faith; his obedience was motivated by his faith
 - Saving faith, genuine faith, produces good works (James 2:14-26) but good works do not earn salvation

3 What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

- Abraham placed his trust, his confidence, in the promises of God and God credited his faith to him as righteousness.
- Credited – an accounting / banking term. In response to Abraham’s faith, God deposited His own righteousness to Abraham’s account. (Genesis 15:1-6; Genesis 12:1-3)
- Abraham’s faith manifested itself in obedience (good works) to God, but his works did not earn salvation for him. God credited salvation to Abraham in response to his faith!

4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

- “Paul uses an example from everyday life. If salvation were based on works, then God, in granting a person salvation, would merely be repaying what He owed that person, just as an employer gives a worker wages for his work.” (*ESV Study Bible, p. 2164*)

6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

- Psalm 32:1-5.
- Cp. Hebrews 12:4-11; 1 John 1:6-10.

Faith is not mysterious nor mystical! Faith is simply taking God at His Word, putting our confidence and trust in what He has revealed to us in His Word.

- Consider the Promises of God: John 5:24-25; John 3:16-18; Acts 16:29-31.
- Do you believe these promises of God? If so, what is the result?

II. Abraham Was not Justified by Circumcision (4:9-12)

III. Abraham Was not Justified by the Law (4:13-15)