

(16) "His Faith Is Reckoned as Righteousness": Faith and Works (4:1-8)

Romans: The Outwork of the Righteousness of God

Justification!—Line of Thought

- The Way of Works Is Blocked (1:18–3:20).
- There Is Another Way (and the Only Way): Justification by Grace through Faith (3:21-26).
- The New Way Requires Exclusivity (3:27-31).
 - Exclusivity: Faith Alone, Not Faith Plus Works.
 - Universality: All Are Saved in the Same Way.
 - Connectivity: The Law Is the Pointer to the Faith.
- The New Way Was Illustrated by the Life of Abraham (and David) (Ch 4).
- The New Life Was Necessitated by the Law (Ch 5).

The Testimony of Abraham

- 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?
- ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
- ³ For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Gen 15:6)
- ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.
- ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

The Testimony of David

- ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:
- ⁷ "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.
- ⁸ "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." (Ps 32:1-2) (Rom 4:1-8).

Why Go Back to Abraham?

- The Jews Viewed Abraham Highly as:
 - The Founder of the Nation.
 - The Father of the Faith (the Religion of Judaism).
 - His Piety Qualified Him before God.
 - His Works (such as Binding Isaac) Made Him Righteous.
 - The Example for All Others to Follow.
 - The Jews Are Saved by Faith Exhibited as Works.
 - Paul's Idea of Salvation by Faith Alone Is Shocking.
 - Abraham Cannot Be Saved in the Same Way as the Sinners.

Why Go Back to David?

- The Jews Viewed David as:
 - The Greatest of All Kings of Israel & Judah.
 - The Most Pious Man Who Wrote the Psalms.
 - The Anointed of God and the Father of the Messiah.
 - He May Be Flawed, but Still Counted as Righteous.
 - He Is the Example for All to Follow:
 - Be Spiritual and Pious (Regarding God).
 - Be Tenacious and Never Giving up (Regarding Man).
 - Paul's Idea that Righteousness Is Not Earned Is Foreign.

Biblical Reality of the Great Men

- Abraham Was a Liar (Twice about Sarah) and a Compromiser of Faith (on Ishmael).
- Isaac Was a Liar (about Rebekah).
- Jacob-Israel Was a Cheater (Twice: on His Brother and His Father).
- Moses Was a Murderer (of an Egyptian) and a Compromiser of Faith (on His Sons Circumcision).
- David Was an Adulterer (with Bathsheba) and a Murderer (of Uriah).
- How Can They Be Counted as Righteous? Is God a Compromiser of his Standard?

God Is No Compromiser

- The Righteousness of Man Is Having the Right Standing before God, Who IS Righteous.
- God Wants to Be Believed More Than Anything.
 - His Honor Is Involved.
 - He Doesn't Need Us Doing Anything for Him.
- The First Priority of Men before God Is Humility.
 - "Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit, for the Kingdom of Heavens Is Theirs" (Matt 5:3)
- For Those Who Recognize that They Cannot Pay Their Sin/Debt, the Merciful God Will Pay Out of His Own Pocket (and Heart: with His Son's Life).

Was Abraham Justified by Works?

- “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?” (Rom 4:1)
 - He Found Himself Overconfident in His Own Wisdom, When He Lied about His Wife in Egypt, and Lost His Honor.
 - He Found Himself Listening to His Wife Inappropriately, in Getting a Concubine Hagar and a Son through Her (Ishmael), Causing the Perennial Strife between the Arabs and the Jews.
 - He Found Himself Weak in Faith, and Lied about His Wife Sarah Again to Abimelech, Only to Be Protected by God for the Honor of God’s Promise of Isaac.

Works and Boasting

- “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.” (Rom 4:2)
 - Boasting Is Sin, Which Cannot Exist in Heaven.
 - Justification by Works Inevitably Leads to Boasting.
 - The Only Way of Salvation Is Justification through Faith in God’s Grace, Apart from Works in the Law.
 - ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

Going Back to the Scripture

- Paul Demonstrated the Connectivity:
 - “³ For what does the Scripture say? ‘ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’” (Rom 4:3)
- It Was Quoted from Genesis
 - “⁶ Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” (Gen 15:6)
- It Was the First Time “Believed” Appeared in the Bible.
- It Was about the First Time The Bible Talked about Obtaining the Status of Righteousness before God.
 - Noah Was Regarded as Righteous (Gen 6:9) because:
 - “He was blameless in His generation” (Not Committing the Typical Sin of Disrespecting Life etc.).
 - And “He Walked with God” (Like Enoch before Him, Gen 5:24).

Righteousness Is Given, Not Earned

- (Gen 15:6) Hb: *Chshav* = Think, Account, Reckon, Regard, Estimate, Consider, Impute, value, design.
- (Rom 4:3) Gk: *Logizomai* = reckon, consider, credit, taken into account, impute.
- As a Gift of Money:
 - Those Who Want and Demand It May Get None.
 - Those Who Don't Demand or Think That They Deserve Anything at All May Get It All.
- No Man Ever Wanted the Righteousness of God by Themselves (Rom 3:10-17).
- All Desires of Righteousness Are Gifts from God, Who Is Seeking for the Lost Men.

God Keeps Books

- God Keeps Books:
 - The Book (of People's Life): Sins That Disqualify.
 - The Book of Life (for All People Ever Lived):
 - The Name Can Be Erased.
 - The Precious Image of God Is Damaged, and Could Be Wasted.
 - The Lamb's Book of Life (for the Redeemed People):
 - The Name Cannot Be Erased.
 - The Person Is Forgiven by the Blood of Jesus.
 - The Person Will Be Restored to the Full Glory of God in Christ.

Receivers Are Not Claimants

- ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, (Rom 4:4-5)
- Wages Are Earned by Workers, Who Claim What Is Rightfully Theirs. They Are Claimed & Undeniable.
 - “The Wage of Sin Is Death” (6:23)
- Grace/Gifts Are Given by Benefactor(s); Receivers
 - Do Not Deserve,
 - Should Not Expect, and
 - Has Nothing to Boast.

Accounting Is Both Ways

- To Have Righteousness Credited to the Personal Account Is Extra Grace.
 - Works May Pretend to Add to the Righteousness.
- To Have the Sin/Debt Erased from the Personal Account Is the Beginning of Grace.
 - Works of Goodness Cannot Erase the Damages Committed in Sin.
- “just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: (Rom 4:6 NAU)

Being Forgiven Is the First Step

- 7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.
- 8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."
(Rom 4:7-8 NAU; Quoted from Ps 32:1-2)
- Jesus' Blood Covered Our Sins.
- Jesus' Righteousness Is Imputed to Us.
- It All Happened through Believing in Him as the Good LORD!

Lesson and Applications

- The Christian Faith Is the Explicit Manifestation of the Faith of Abraham.
- Believing the LORD as the Honorable God Who Keeps His Promises Is the Foundation of the Proper Relationship to Him (= Man's Righteousness before God).
- Righteousness Is a Gift of God to Those Who Believe in Him as Who He Is.

Lesson and Applications

- The Erasing of the Records of Our Unrighteous Deeds Is the First Step of Grace.
- The Accrediting of Christ's Righteousness to Believers Is Grace upon Grace.
- We Have Nothing That Could Buy Us God's Righteousness.
- Simply Come to the Throne of the High King and Humbly Recognize Him.
- He Will Do All Things We Need for Our Good and His Honor.