

SALT Church

Romans 4:9-13

“By Faith Alone...”

September 14, 2025

“The Greatest Book Ever Written”

David and Cindy

Recap:

Romans 4:4-8

⁴ Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. ⁵ However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶ David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those

**whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.**

⁸ Blessed is the one

whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

Here is what we learned last week:

- Works cannot save you
- You cannot keep the 613 commands from the Old Testament.
- Our only hope is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ which proclaims:
 - All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- The wages of sin is death, why?
 - Because God is a Holy & just God and judge.
 - All sin is a personal attack on God, His Glory, and His righteousness.
- **So, how does a righteous and just Judge maintain His righteousness and forgive sin?**
 - In other words, “the wages of sin” must be paid every time.
 - So, how can the wages of sin be paid (death) and forgiveness be made possible (life)?
 - The only solution is that the debt be paid by someone who can pay the debt.
 - The sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Now, with this knowledge we can understand the power of the gospel to save and make righteous the forgiven sinner.

We looked at Psalms 32 as we agreed with King David’s words

7 “Blessed are those

whose transgressions are forgiven,

whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the one

whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

We talked about the horrible sins of adultery and murder that David had committed and yet he was forgiven in anticipation of the cross.

From that we concluded that God’s grace, love, and mercy are amazing.

Ephesians 2:8 sums up everything we learned last week the best:

Ephesians 2:8

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

You did not work for it nor earn it,

- your salvation and mine is the work and gift of God alone.

Now we pick up where we left off:

Romans 4:9-13

⁹Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?

- Yea, back to the “circumcision thing again”
- We have already covered this in chapters 2 & 3.
 - Why is this issue so important that Paul and The Holy Spirit that they continue to bring it back up?

So, let's establish what circumcision symbolizes:

- **Circumcision is a sign**, and outward act of some type of faith.
 - It could be faith in God the Father or Jesus Christ.
 - It can also be a faith in religion, particularly the Jewish religion.
- What was the point of circumcision?
 - “Without the tearing away of the flesh and the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness”, therefore no righteousness.
 - Righteousness that is required for salvation.

Now, with that in mind I want you to (in your mind) replace circumcision with being a Jew.

- God gave the sign of circumcision to His chosen people the Jews as a sign that one day their salvation would be completed in Jesus' flesh when it would be torn and His blood shed.

So, verse 9 could be understood this way:

9 Is this blessedness only for the JEW, or also for the UNJEW (Gentile)?

- What is the blessedness that Paul speaks?
 - **Righteousness** that was credited through faith which was given by God grace.

We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

- We are saved by grace, through faith, which is the free gift from God.
- Because Abraham, believed, trusted, or had faith, God the Father credited him with the righteousness needed for salvation.

10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before?

- In other words, was Abraham credited with righteousness before he received the sign of circumcision?
- Did Abraham do anything other than believe before he was credited with righteousness (saved)?

It was not after, but before!

- Genesis 15- 17 tell us that there were approximately 14 years between when God said that Abraham was credited with righteousness and the act or the sign of circumcision.

Why do you think this is important for us to understand?

So many people say things like this:

- “I’ll give myself to the Lord as soon as I get a few things cleaned up in my life.”
- “I want to give myself to the Lord but there are a few things that I have to fix.”

Let me let you in on a little secret:

- **YOU CANNOT CLEAN YOURSELF UP ENOUGH TO PRESENT YOURSELF TO A HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS GOD!**
 - Do you understand that He is the only one who can clean you up?
 - No one says, “I will go to the doctor as soon as I am well.”
 - No one washes their car before they go to the carwash!

Abraham trusted God and that is when he was credited with righteousness.

- 14 years later God will call Abraham to the outward sign of circumcision.
 - *So, it is with us*, we come with all our secret sins and confess what He already knows.
 - **We believe**, meaning we place our faith, hope, and trust in Him.
 - **He forgives** and credits us with righteousness.

Back to Romans 4

¹⁰ Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!

¹¹ And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

- So, what we see is that Abraham's act of worship (his work) was motivated out of love and not out of fear or a desire to earn anything.
- His circumcision was not his saving grace, it was a sign of his faith, but it was not where his faith was placed.
- Paul and the Holy Spirit desire that we see this act of circumcision (This process of being known as a follower of God) as a sign or a seal of the righteousness that had been given to him through his faith.
- Like baptism, it is a sign that proclaims faith, but it cannot save you.
- So, what can we say?
 - You and I are saved by grace through faith and as a result we desire baptism as an act of obedience to God.
 - We are saved the day that we place our faith, hope, and trust in Christ alone.
 - We proclaim it to the world through the public act of baptism.

This is the same point that Paul is making about Abraham.

- 1st came grace, then faith, then righteousness, 14 years later the sign.

Back to Romans

So then, he (Abraham) is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

Allow me to paraphrase

So then, (Abraham) is the father of all who believe but are not Jews, in order that righteousness might be credited to the Gentiles.

- ***You and I do not understand how scandalous that statement would be.***
 - Which means that there will be millions of non-believing Jews in Hell!
 - This is the same culture that believed that Abraham would stand at the gates of Hell and not allow any Jew to enter regardless of how sinful they were.

(side note)

- Somewhere along the way the Jews forgot that they are not a race.
- There is only one race, the human race.
- The Bible never divides by race but rather by believer and pagan or Jew and gentile.
- All of us can trace our family roots back to Noah and his family.
 - What's my point?
 - The same family that produced Abraham and David also produced Nimrod and Judas.
 - Yea but wasn't the blessing through Abraham?

- It was but don't forget that just before Moses' death God told Moses that His people were going to rebel against Him and He would be forced to bring calamity and judgement upon them.
- In other words, their rebellion would bring about a curse.
- What's my point?
 - It is God's grace and gift of faith that determines who is credited with righteousness not your relation to your grandfather.

Back to Romans

¹² And he (Abraham) is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

- ***“Follow in the footsteps of the faith”*** What does that mean?
 - It means:
 - Faith changes everything.
 - Faith changes how we see the world and especially how we see God.
 - Faith changes our perspective from the present temporary to the future eternal.

What is faith?

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

- **Faith = confidence**
- **Faith produces confidence especially when we can't see.**

Faith will change your attitude!

- What do we know about our attitudes?
 - Attitudes are overflows of the heart
 - Our attitude and heart must be changed (why?)
 - Attitudes determine decisions
 - Decisions determine actions
 - Actions determine futures
 - **Faith changes attitudes**
 - **Need proof?**

Hebrews 11:4

⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death:

⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

²² By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

²³ By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

Faith changes everything and faith motivates us to action.

- It changes attitudes
- It changes how we see the world
 - How we see God.
 - How we see ourselves and our purpose in this life.

One last thing that I must point out before we return to Romans is this:

- ***None of these actions from Hebrews 11 were easy.***

Somewhere along the way we have become convinced that if things get difficult that God is mad at us or that God is not with us.

- Why?
 - **Because we don't know our Bibles.**

2 Timothy 3:12

12 Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

- There will be difficulty for the child of God.

Consider what Jesus says in Luke 22

Luke 22:31-32

31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. 32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So, when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

- Satan does ask for permission to “SIFT EACH OF YOU.”

- Meaning, God allows Satan and his demons to attack us in the areas that we need God the most.
 - Meaning, that the point of God allowing that weakness to be revealed is **to point out our greatest area of need so that we will run to the Father** so that our weakness may be made strong.
- “Sifting” is the process of removing the trash from the wheat.
 - “Sifting” is a purifying process that is required for maturity in the faith.

We must remember and understand what Jesus said in Matthew

Matthew 11:28-30

28 Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

How does that prove your point, Pastor?

- ***There is still a yoke***
- ***There is still a burden***

Back to Romans

12 And he (Abraham) is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the

footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

- Paul finally addresses the issue with the Roman Jews.
 - Somehow, they had come to believe that keeping the Law secured the promises of God.
 - This is the cart before the horse.
 - Faith must come 1st then righteousness which produces actions as a result of their faith.
 - A faith that is the free gift of God.

The point is this:

- Boasting in your relation to Abraham is fruitless if you do not understand that Abraham's faith is why he was credited with righteousness.
- His righteous actions then become the fruit of his faith which was given as a free gift from God through God's grace.
 - In short, if you want to boast, boast in God's grace, mercy, and His gift of faith.

There is danger in a "works based" theology.

Jesus explains it this way in Luke 15:

Luke 15:11-32

¹¹ To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. ¹² The younger son told his father, 'I want my

share of your estate now before you die.’ So, his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

¹³ “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. ¹⁴ About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. ¹⁵ He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.”’

²⁰ “So, he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. **Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.** ²¹ His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’

²² “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. ²³ And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead

and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’
So, the party began.

Oh Father, thank you for saving me!

Here comes the danger of a works based theology

²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, ²⁶ and he asked one of the servants what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’

²⁸ “The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, ²⁹ but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. ³⁰ Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’

³¹ “His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. ³² We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’”

Legalistic work-based theology makes you proud and angry at the lost and the immature.

- **It keeps records of things done**

- **It hates grace and mercy**
 - **While never recognizing the grace and mercy that has been shown to that person.**
 - **It rejects this great truth that is taught by Jesus and the Apostle Paul:**
 - **It is by grace alone**
 - **Through faith alone**
 - **In Jesus Christ that we are saved.**