

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Lesson 4 – Faith Alone

This text is about *believing and belonging*. Paul has been arguing that we are saved by faith in Christ alone (3:21-26). Now he supports this doctrine with the story of Abraham. Additionally, from the story of Abraham, Paul also teaches that all true believers in Christ—whether Jew or Gentile—belong to Abraham’s family.

Scholar Michael Bird says this children’s song is a good summary of this text. By faith in Christ alone, we are not only counted righteous (4:23), but we are also made part of the family of God. Bird says, “Faith is not just what I assent to; it is also about whom I belong to. Faith is about family, a Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled, and God-centered family.

Faith is not a privatized affair but is a genuinely family event. God does not save us and then assign us a number until it is time to go to heaven one individual at a time. Rather, God saves us and puts us into his family for the purpose of sharing in the family business of worship and mission.

Our sense of identity, purpose, security, and worth is bound up with belonging. The church is the place where that identity, purpose, security, and sense of worth are formed. It is this sense of belonging that enables us to flourish as individuals and even as whole communities.

Belonging to a community is a basic human desire, and in the gospel that need is met. Believing means belonging, and in this experience we grow and flourish. The glory of this family is that it is so diverse. Christians do not belong to a look-alike club but to a diverse, global family. The family of Abraham is like a great bowl of gumbo; in it, all types of believers are united in one Lord.

Recently, I was talking to a pastor friend. He was telling me about the church's small-group ministry. One of his groups consists of a leader of a multinational technology company but also includes a single mom with a checkered history, some couples with diverse backgrounds, a few new believers, and a few college students.

It was a joy to sit and reflect on how these diverse people came together each week to study, ask questions, pray, share life, and serve the local community. That’s what the gospel does. To be a believer means you are now a "belonged."

1. Believing: Abraham Counted Righteous by Faith Alone (4:1-8)
2. Belonging: Abraham, the Father of All Who Believe (4:9-17)
 - a. Not Justified By Circumcision (4:9-12)
 - b. Not Justified by the Law (4:13-17)
3. Believing: Abraham and Us (4:18-25)
 - a. The Marks of Abraham’s Faith (4:18-22)
 - b. The Messiah and Resurrection Faith (4:23-25)
 - c. Practical Applications of our Faith