



RESURRECTION SUNDAY

MARCH 31, 2024

SERMON: Jesus was **Raised to Life** to Make us Right with God

SCRIPTURE: Romans 4

Jesus was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God (*Verse 25*).

SUMMARY: Romans 4 serves as an illustration of the truth in Chapter 3, Verse 28; “*We are made right with God through faith not by keeping the law.*” Paul goes to the “father of faith” to make a chapter long case for justification through faith not by works.

Abraham believed God. Abraham’s faith is foundational to our understanding of how we can be made right with God. Abraham is the father of all who believe. Romans Chapter 4 is focused on Abraham’s faith and by extension our own! A truth in Scripture and clearly in Romans 4 is that by faith one is made right with God, not by works. **Paul connects Abraham’s faith in God to our faith in Jesus. The work that truly matters, is the work Jesus did on the cross.** By his death, He delivers all who believe from the penalty of sin. By his resurrection, he promises forever life to all who believe. “*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved*” (*Romans 10:10*).

Understanding the significance of Abraham’s faith is foundational to understanding faith today, and Paul uses Romans 4 to drive home this point. Seventeen times he invokes the name Abraham in this one chapter. Not counting Genesis, Abraham is mentioned twice as often in the New Testament as the Old Testament. Romans chapter

4 has more references to Abraham than any other book in the Bible with the lone exception of Genesis.

I. ABRAHAM BECAME THE FATHER OF ALL WHO BELIEVE (VS 1-12)

Abraham became the father of all who believe because he believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

- The *contrast* of faith and works
- The *connection* of promise and gift

ROMANS 4:1-8

1 Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? 2 If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. 3 For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."

4 When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. 5 But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. 6 David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it:

7 "Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sins are put out of sight.

8 Yes, what joy for those
whose record the Lord has cleared of sin."

- Humanly Speaking (*Verse 1*)

Abraham became a spiritual father to all who have faith. Circumcision came after faith for Abraham. Not so for every other Jewish male. Now every male Jew or gentile is saved by faith, not circumcision or works.

ROMANS 4:9-10

9 Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. 10 But how did this happen? Was he counted as

righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

- God Accepted Abraham! (*Verse 10*)

ROMANS 4:11-12

11 Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith.

12 And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

II. GOD BLESSES THOSE WHO BY FAITH HAVE BEEN MADE RIGHT WITH HIM! (VS. 13-19)

God's blessings, the fulfillment of His promises, come to those who have a right relationship with him.

ROMANS 4:13-15

13 Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. 14 If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless.

15 For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

- Right Relationship with God (*Verse 13*)

ROMANS 4:16-19

16 So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. 17 That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

18 Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" 19 And Abraham's faith did not

weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah’s womb.

III. BELIEVE GOD, THE ONE WHO RAISED JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD! (VS. 20-25)

ROMANS 4:20-25

20 Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. 21 He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. 22 And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous. 23 And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn’t just for Abraham’s benefit. It was recorded 24 for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

Abraham was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises (*Verse 21*).

The older Abraham became the less likely, humanly speaking, it became that he was going to become a father with Sarah. He never lost hope even when there was no reason for hope.

As Abraham stood over Isaac lying on the altar with the knife drawn, he still had unwavering hope that God would fulfill his promise.

He didn’t know how, but he knew that He would!
He didn’t know when, but he knew that one day he would!
He didn’t know who, but he knew someone would be chosen!

ROMANS 6:3-11

3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

LIFE APPLICATION SERMON GUIDE:

1. How did Abraham become right with God?
2. Describe the difference between work and faith. How do work and faith complement each another? What is wrong with thinking one might earn the right to be saved?
3. What promises did God make to Abraham?
4. Abraham believed God because God spoke to Him. Today men believe God because Jesus is God and he came to earth to speak to us! Men and women believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He gave his life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty of our sins and that He rose on the third day. Why doesn't everyone believe?
5. Are you inspired by Abraham's faithfulness to God? Abraham did hear God but he didn't have the Scripture as we do today or the Holy Spirit. Abraham didn't know Jesus, His death and resurrection and yet Paul wrote Abraham is the father of all who believe. How are you inspired by Abraham's faith? Paul certainly was!
6. Name one or more moments when Abraham's faith could have faltered. Describe why you think his faith didn't falter?
7. **PRAY:** Thank the Lord for the forgiveness of your sins and for the resurrection and the promise of eternal life! Ask the Lord to strengthen your faith and to help you guide others to faith!