

The Book of Romans - Scripture: Romans 4

Main Idea: God has always made people right with Himself by faith, and real faith does not merely agree with God. It walks with God.

Key Context: Paul has just taught that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

Romans 3:28: “For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.”

The question in Romans 4 is simple: Has God always worked this way? Paul answers by pointing to Abraham.

1. Abraham was made right with God by faith

Romans 4:3: “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Abraham was not counted righteous because of his works, his circumcision, or his obedience to the law. He believed God, and righteousness was credited to him.

Genesis 15:6: “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

Key Point: Righteousness [right relatedness to God] is credited, not achieved.

2. God’s promise came before circumcision and before the law

Romans 4:10 to 11: “Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!” Abraham was counted righteous before circumcision. This matters because Paul is showing that Abraham’s relationship with God was based on faith before any outward sign was given.

Romans 4:13 “It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise...but through the righteousness that comes by faith.”

Galatians 3:7 “Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.”

Key Point: Faith has always been the foundation of right relationship with God.

TURN OVER

3. Salvation by faith is available to all

Romans 4:16 “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring.” Paul is showing that Abraham is not only the father of the circumcised, but of all who believe. Jew and Gentile come to God the same way, by faith.

Romans 10:9 “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Key Point: No one is too far gone, too messy, or too undeserving for the grace of God.

5. Biblical faith is lived out trust

Romans 4:20-21 “Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God...being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”

Faith is not merely agreement with an idea. Faith trusts God enough to walk with Him.

James 2:17 “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

Hebrews 11:8 “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went.”

Key Point: Faith is opposed to earning, but it is not opposed to effort.

5. Romans 4 ends with Jesus

Romans 4:24 to 25 “For us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Romans 4 does not end by telling us to admire Abraham. It ends by pointing us to Jesus. Abraham believed the God who gives life to the dead. Christians believe in the God who raised Jesus from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3 “In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Key Point: Our faith rests in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Reflection

Where am I tempted to treat righteousness as something I achieve instead of something God credits by grace?

Who do I struggle to believe could truly be saved by the grace of God?

Is my faith only something I claim, or is it something I am walking out?

Where is God calling me to trust Him enough to obey?