

# No Hope in the Law - Rom 4

Alright, so we had a glitch there. Apparently, I only put two songs into the worship set. And I thought I did three. So I apologize about that took me by surprise when the music stopped. So I apologize about that. But we're gonna move forward with our church service as is.

We're going to continue this week through the Romans road. I want to introduce this with new eyes because as I've been going through it, and as I've been... as God has been changing me through His Word, and His Spirit, I have I have a new outlook on Romans myself. So I was reading Romans 6 the other day, and I read something we're not... we still got two weeks before we get there. But as I was reading, I just had a whole brand new outlook on that, that I had never before had. And so I want to introduce the series all over again, Romans Road, new eyes, what it is we're hoping to achieve, as we have... as we've established the last couple of weeks already we are sinners, right. We talked about we talked about last week there, as we recapped, Romans 1 and 2, that there really is no hope in our works, okay. So I hope that as we go through the series, that any of us who are putting our faith and our trust in our works, that we will know that will not save us we will know why it will not save us and understand that. And I also hope that for those of us who believe we are putting our faith in God in Christ and His work, but we are really putting it in ourselves. I hope that we'll be convicted of that. In the coming weeks as we go through the series, that we will realize our mistake there and that we will put our faith where it belongs that we will fix our eyes upon Jesus. Remember Hebrews 12 tells us that to run the race, and the fix our eyes upon Jesus. And I pray I think a lot of us, we believe that we have already done that. But we're really, we're looking internally, I also pray that we will, we will learn the difference of how we can present ourselves to one master or the other, even with the Spirit of God in us, and that we will learn really what it is to be a Christian, what it is to walk the Romans road, and what it will be to truly trust in Jesus.

So recap in last week's message. When on that no one is righteous, right? There is no difference between Jew and Gentile. For we have proven that all have sinned. 'Kay, later on Paul will tell us in the same chapter that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We are all sinners, we have established that works cannot save us that our works are filthy rags in the sight of God. And that we will always follow up will always come up short. And we had then established then that our only hope is in a righteousness imputed to us. Paul tells us, He says, "There is a righteousness of God revealed apart from the law and that is the righteousness through faith." 'Kay, that's a righteousness that we don't... we don't earn righteousness. We don't become righteousness by our deeds but it is imputed to us through the work of Christ and what He has done. We are accounted righteous for His sake. So we're going to continue that same train of thought; in fact, we kind of stopped halfway through that train of thought, where it continues into chapter four, we're going to pick up with this same... same line of thinking a little bit. And we are going to continue to see how it is that faith saves without works. We're going to look at Abraham, our example, and the Father of Faith. And we're also going to talk about forgiveness a little bit today, beginning in Romans 4 verses one through five. And then we're going to continue reading but jump over to verse nine, through twelve.

Let's read: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Jump over to verse nine, "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

'Kay, so we ended last week discussing that our faith in Jesus is what saves us, not our works. Not, as I've been really struggling with the last week, we can have not our faith in our faith or our our belief being sincere enough, you know, our belief on our belief, but our faith in Jesus, we receive righteousness. We also ended talking about whether or not we should sin more that grace may abound more. And we said, God forbid, because through faith, we established the law. Paul asked, right there at the end, he says, Do we abolish the law, through faith? He says, nay, rather, we establish it; we uphold it. So then "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" Okay, if Abraham are justified by works, he would have had had something to boast about if Abraham received the covenant, you know, the promises, the nation's the seed, the gifts of God because of his works. He can be extremely boastful right now. But it says not before God. We can't boast before God. But let's examine Abraham for a minute, what do we know about him? And a lot of this, I'm going to assume I'm going to read into the scriptures a little bit, what we know about him. But Abraham... Abraham's father was an idol maker, okay. We can assume that Abraham had worshipped pagan gods. We can assume that Abraham was just as wicked as the rest of us. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. In fact, we were going through the book of Genesis right now. And we have seen a few of these failures of Abraham, right? When Abraham went to Egypt, what did he do? We see that Abraham acted sometimes in faith, but we also see that his faith was not even perfect, right? For Abraham went into Egypt fearing that they would kill him, for his wife sake, and he told a lie. We see that later on, Abraham repeats the same lie. We see that he's a habitual liar, right? In fact, he... he told us the king later on, that this is our practice, our habit. So Abraham was likely a pagan worshipper. He was a habitual liar. He had no works of his own, that would justify himself. But he believed. What saith the Scripture? Here in verse three, it says that Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. And this is a citation of Genesis 15 Verse 6, where we are told that Abraham's righteousness was accounted to him because of his faith in God. And we see that faith play out for when he was 75 years old, God called out unto him and taught him Abraham, get thee out of your father's country and leave. He says, go to a land that I will show you. It was not his works, that he received the promise, but it was his faith, to get up and go. It was his faith, that God would bring him somewhere and do something for him? We see the same faith later on. And James will talk about this the book of James, when Abraham offered up Isaac. Okay, we are told that in that we see that his faith is perfected in that he was willing, that he believed. Hebrews 13, or 11 tells us that he believed that God

could raise him again. He offered him with faith in God that he would fulfill the promise. And so we see that Abraham was righteous, not in his works, but in his faith unto God. And I love what it says that says here, verse four, that to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. If you were to turn your pages to Romans 11, and read verse six, it'll tell you, that for if it is by grace that cannot be of works for if by works, grace is no longer grace.

So what is grace? Grace is the unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor of God. We are wicked, we are sinners in His sight. He is holy. There is no one like Him. And we are defiled. We read last week that nobody seeks after God, no one is righteous. No one wants to do good. We are evil. It is unmerited. There is nothing that we can do. You know, we've just shown that it's undeserved and it's unmerited and that there is nothing that you or I can ever do to earn it. We will never... we will never get to a point where God will tell us I am giving this to you because you have worked hard for it; because you have done so well. It is undeserved, unmerited favor of God. It is because of Him, that we get it, because of His love for us. It is because He is holy. Because He is merciful; because He is full of grace and love. We read last night in John chapter one, that in Christ Jesus we receive grace upon grace, because that is the nature of God but he's also just so this tells us here, 'Kay, Paul was talking about the works verse grace, debate going on here, he says that if we work, the reward the promises of God is not reckoning of grace but of debt. If we had earned our way to heaven, it is not a gift of God. He is not giving it to us because of his loving nature but because it was earned. It is it is a debt We will never be the debtor to God. Now I have to make sure I use the term debtor right. Now I'm... I'm really making myself think that if I use that properly. 'Kay, God will never owe us anything. But Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that it is by grace, we are saved through faith and it's not of ourselves, it's a gift of God and not the result of works less no man may boast.

So Paul is driving this point home grace can not be grace, it cannot be the gift of God if we have to earn it. But to him who work at not, but believeth on Him, that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Our righteousness is imputed because who are we? We are the ungodly. We need to be justified. And that comes not by working but believing on him. And the beautiful thing is that will pour out of us good works. It will. But it's the belief that's that faith in Jesus that justifies us. Paul in verses nine through twelve, he really... he discusses this point. Is this upon the circumcision only or the uncircumcision also? Okay, are only the members of the Jewish faith... Do only those members have access to this grace of God? No. For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness prior to the circumcision. Abraham's faith comes before the circumcision, but the circumcision was a sign a token of that covenant. It was that sign between him and God, that there was a promise to be kept. Okay, Abraham was not Jewish. Can we say that? He was the father of the Jews, through Isaac and then Jacob, he was not Jewish. He was a heathen Gentile. Who was chosen, who is elect of God. I put in here my notes that he believed that he was saved before the law. And think of that for a moment: that Abraham lived 430 years prior to the law. And today we have many religious establishments, not just the Jews. But in... in Christian sects, we have many establishments that put such a heavy emphasis on the law, and on being worthy to receive the grace of God. I remember being in such a religion, where I had to work to attain that, where I had to live, righteous enough in my own deeds, to be worthy enough to be deemed to receive the gifts of God. And yet, Abraham lived 430 years prior to the law and he was counted for righteousness. We see then, that it was through his faith that Abraham received his righteousness and in the same way, when we believe it is imputed to us.

I want to review this flow of thought we went over last week from Romans three, 'kay? There is a righteousness of God through faith. For whom? For all who believe. But why? Because there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. And why is that? Because all have sinned. 'Kay, we are all guilty of transgressing the Father. So what's the solution? Justification through grace by faith in Christ Jesus. I want to establish here that there is no hope of salvation is through the law. Look with me at verses 13 through 16: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: ... Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." Look what Paul writes here, the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Why? Because if it is, by the law, that we be heirs, or they be heirs, faith is void. Why is faith void? Well if it's by the law no faith is required for one, that places it on me and faith becomes void. But if it is of the law, the promises of none effect, because I cannot keep the promise... I cannot keep the law. I cannot obey it. I cannot follow it. In every day, that I keep the law and all the laws that I keep it's by the grace of God and His Spirit in me, because my flesh, my flesh wants to break those laws. My flesh, I said this yesterday to a group of people, 'kay, it's the moment you are told you cannot do something is the moment you immediately want to do that exact thing.

So we see that if the promise is through the law, there is no promise there, is no hope. If God's plan of salvation, is that we come here, and we work hard and we try to show ourselves worthy enough for His grace, that he would give us a promise that he would give us salvation, there is no hope at all. We might as well stop trying. "Kay, the law, worketh wrath. The Law of God reveals to us our sin nature and condemns us. And therefore, no man by the works of the law may be justified, but only receive condemnation and eternal damnation. But where there is no law, there is no transgression. For we who are under the law of grace through faith, we have no transgression by which to be charged. Our sins are washed white as snow. I love... I love that quote from the Old Testament, though our sins be read a scarlet, they will be washed, white as snow. Why? Because I'm an amazing person? Because I managed to impress God? No, but because He died for me. He who knew no sin became sin. He came in the flesh in the likeness of sin, to eradicate it, that I can stand before the judgment seat of God. Therefore it is a faith that it might be by grace. To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed not that which is the only that which is the law, but to that also which is the faith of Abraham. Abraham is the father of us all. For we are adopted into his covenant we are grafted into the family.

I have an illustration here on works in salvation. I did take it out of a book and there is no author cited here. You will not scramble five good eggs and one rotten egg and serve the mixture to guest expecting it to be acceptable. What do you would we, when we say okay, I need I need six eggs, and one of them is rotten and let's mix that in right when we serve that to our guests. No.

So even less can you serve up to a God a life, or to God a life that has good things in it tainted with deeds and thoughts that are rotten and and expect it to be acceptable to God. By no works can we be saved or justified because we cannot serve up on a silver platter to a God, our filthy and dirty works and expect him to accept it. If you wanted to get to heaven by your good works, then you would have to be

perfect, which would mean complete obedience to God at all times. But all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

A leading manufacturing company developed a new cake mix that required only water to be added. I think that's great. Pour the powder and mix some water and put it in the oven, pull it out and we got a cake test were run surveys were made. And the cake mix was found to be of a superior quality to any other mix available. It tasted good. It was easy to use. It was moist it was tender. The company spent large sums of money on an advertising campaign and realized and they released the cake into the general market and few people. Hardly anyone bought it. Why? Well, the company wants to know why as well. They want to know, why did we spend hundreds of thousands, millions of dollars to develop in the state of the art mix, and nobody will buy it. They spent more money now on a survey to figure out why it's not selling. And based on the results of the survey, The company recalled the mix, they reworked the formula and they released a revised one. The new formula required that one out not only water, but also a single egg. And it's sold like hotcakes and is now a leading product in the field. You see, the first cake mix was just too simple to be believable, and people will not accept it.

And the same is true of salvation by grace. Okay, it seems so simple, so easy. That people just cannot accept it. An old parable says a silly servant, who was taught to open the door sets a soldier shoulder to it and push us with all his might. And the door stirs not he cannot enter. He may use whatever strength he has. And he will never get through the door. And another comes with a key and easily unlocks the door and enters right readily. Those who would be saved by works are pushing Heaven's gates without result. They're there they're pushing. They're shoving. They got wedges in. Ok, we used in the fire department to break into a door, a wedge and we put it in there and it pops the door open and they got wedges. But the door the gates to heaven are not budgin because faith is the key that opens the gate. Faith is the key that you can walk up and the gate will open for you. And you will walk right on it and while everybody else is shoving against it and heaving and pushing.

It's so simple that people just refuse to accept it. Let's look at Abraham's example of faith. Verses 17 through 22. As it is written, I have made thee A father of many nations before whom before him whom he believed even God, who quickeneth the dead and call it those things which be not as though they were Who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be and be enough not weaken faith he consider not his own body now dead when he was about 100 years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God to unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform and therefore, it was imputed to him for righteousness. I love this. Okay God who can quickeneth the dead, but direct context to your tells us that we're referring to Sarah's womb, which was dead, and He can Quicken it. But God can also quickeneth the dead who are dead in spirit who are spiritually dead and alive and sin. And he can quicken the dead who are in Him to resurrect into eternal life. And tells us that he call it those things which be not as though they were. The very first verse of the Bible says in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And I love this first, because when we look at the Hebrew that word created is, is the Hebrew word Bara, which means to create, out of nothing. God creates, he can call those things which be not as though they were. He can call things into being. And he believed in that God, that tells us that Abraham, against hope, believed in hope. When he was called of God, he was already

75 I don't know a 75 year old, anywhere, who thinks that they're gonna go and have babies right now? He was 75. It wasn't until much, much later in his life, right? Sarah 90 And him 100 That he even had Isaac, he had no reason to hope for Isaac, but that God said, he would come, he against hope, believed and hope that he would become the father of many nations. For God had promised him that he will make him a father of many nations, and that through him, through his seed, with all the families of the earth be blessed. It says here, he was not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, or the deadness of Sarah's womb? What does this describe? This is describing that Abraham placed his faith in God. His faith was not in himself, because faith was not in his own ability to perform at 100 years old. If I live to be that long, I don't think I'll have any ability to perform. But Abraham placed no faith in himself, no hoping himself, but he put it into God. It says that he staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God. Abraham says, God, I thank you and praise you for the promises you have given me when he looked and had no seed. When he looked at a 90 year old Sarah, who had never given birth, who had never conceived, whose womb was dead, he looked at God and said, Thank You, Lord, for through her shall my heir be, he staggered, not in unbelief. But he was fully persuaded that when he had promised what He had promised, God had promised, he was able to perform. You want to know what faith is? That is faith.

When you are fully persuaded that what God had said he will do he will do when you are fully persuaded that God said, if you will call upon my name, you will be saved. When you were fully persuaded that through the atonement of Christ, you shall be saved. When you can look on him and say, Thank You, Lord, for I am redeemed, because of your grace and Your mercy. And not anything that I did. When you were fully persuaded that when it is done, he will raise you from the dead unto eternal life. Because he said, he can and he is able to perform and then therefore He was imputed to Him to Abraham, for righteousness. No trust in himself, no works, but belief in God. Therefore we can conclude here, we can summarize tonight that no works of our flesh will ever justify us. And that they could grace or not be grace, right. But God would reckon it to us the reward as of a debt, and he will never owe us anything. But we can see after Abraham we can see faith in action. We can see what faith would look like, we can see what it means to call upon the name of the Lord. And to put your hope in him the Bible here says to believe against hope and hope. Here we, we can see why works will not just like that cake mix was so easy. It was the best, the highest quality and nobody would buy it because it was so simple. And yeah, if anybody would have said, for \$2 I ought to give this a try. But no, they look at it and say nothing, just water. And they mocked. They went in got something that required more, that required themselves. And we are guilty of that. As Christians, we often we look to our self we question am I doing good enough for my salvation? Am I living righteously enough? Am I worthy enough to receive the gifts of God? So many Christians are up there they are pushing and heaving against the gates of heaven and they are not budging because they're trying too hard. They're putting their faith and trust in the wrong thing. When faith in Christ would cause their skates to open on their own, automatically, okay, like our sliding doors at Walmart today. We walk right up to them and they open for us and we walk in but, as David had said, in verses six through eight here, we skipped some verses lets go and read those Steve had said he described the blessing of the man and to whom God imputed righteousness without works. He said, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered? Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. We have a choice here, right? We can have sin imputed to us, which we have rightly earned, or we can have grace imputed to us but blessed is that man whose iniquities are forgiven. Who is found in the Lord. This is

David's prayer. Whse sins are covered? Notice not blessed is the man who goes and he works hard and puts his faith in what he can do but blessed is the man who was covered okay, because to be justified, is to be forgiven. God says that I will toss your sins into the sea of forgetfulness. He says, I will remember them no more. And the Psalms He says that as far as the east is to the west, will your sins be removed.

And we're perishing, people are perishing now. Because they won't put their faith in Jesus for that. Romans 10 Nine says that Whosoever shall confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart, that God raised Him from the dead he shall be saved. not he who works himself to his dying breath trusting that because his good deeds outweigh his bad, but he who confesses the Lord Jesus and believes in his heart. I want to ask you tonight Are you trusting in yourself? Are you trusting in your good deeds because if you are you are perishing but just like with that cake, it is that simple. Just add water, ok. Just believe in Jesus, I'm calling out to you right now. But whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Are you hearing this, a heathen? Who has no hope right now. You have nothing to hope for. But you're just walking in darkness. You're walking in sin and you're you got fears and worries about the world and where we're going, and you're tired and you are weary. Jesus will take that from you. Jesus says to come to Him, those who are weary burden, ok, he says that if you go to him and take upon his yoke, he will give you rest. He tells us to not worry about anything but to cast our cares upon Him to pray in all things.

You can have this tonight. You can have this right now. Okay, if you feel the Spirit of God pulling you toward him tonight. Don't resist. But cry out to Him. Because then you can call him father you can call him Abba. The Bible says that if we will confess Jesus before our fellow man, he will confess us before the Father says that we're for believe in Him. That He will give us a new birth, we will be a new creation in him. If you want that, it will begin right now, with admitting that you are a sinner, can't you are guilty before God and you cannot save yourself, with believing that Jesus is God in the flesh who came down in the likeness of sin. But knowing no sin. That He died on the cross. That he was buried and that he rose from the grave that third day and confess and that He is Lord. And let's ask him to your heart. Let's ask him to restore you to give you a new birth in him. And you too can experience the love, the grace and the mercy of God. Let's pray.

Father, I come broken and I come a sinner. I cannot say myself, I know that I am guilty. I know that I have brought upon myself condemnation. But I know your Word says that there is a righteousness of God apart from the works of the law that is a Righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. And I believe. I believe in you Jesus, I believe that you are God that you are perfect that you are holy. I believe in your work and I i have no hope, apart from you. And so I confess You as my Lord, I confess You as my God. And I asked you to pour your spirit into my heart right now. To give me a new birth in you that I will be freed from the sin from the chains of sin and from death. Now I can walk in newness of life glorifying you and praising you. Thank you. Thank you, Jesus.

Father, I pray that we will walk in your glory that we will walk in your light and we will shine with the radiance of the sun and that all who look upon us will see you and that they will want you the word And Lord, I pray that you will use us to reach the souls of the lost, those who are perishing, for Your glory

and for your benefit and Lord, we will praise you all the more in Jesus beautiful, and blessing and we pray. Amen. Amen.