

Romans 4:1-25

- Opening Comments and Opening Prayer
- I never liked the word religious.
- There are many people who are religious:
- The Mormons, Moslems, and the Jehovah Witnesses are religious.
- As well as the Scientologists, Spiritualists, and a myriad of other
- Religions and philosophies, who do not count Jesus Christ as their head.
- I call myself a Christian, or a man of Faith.
- And Romans Chapter 4 is a Chapter about Faith.
- It's about the faith of Abraham, and how it can set a pattern,
- Or an example for us in our own lives.
- Today we are going to read about the righteousness that comes by faith.
- And we know that Abraham was justified by faith.
- And it was his that faith brought about good works.
- Read Romans Chapter 4

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: ⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

⁹ Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, ¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. ¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he

would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” ²³ But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

- Again, many in Paul’s audience in Rome were Jews,
- And the Jews were very much focused on keeping all the laws.
- Circumcision was a requirement that God had given to Abraham and to the Jews, and they believed that that was their sign of righteousness.
- But they missed the point that Abraham was counted righteous B4 that.
- For us today, we don’t think that way, but it is a good grounding,
- And serves as a reminder of what does saves us. And hopefully,
- None of us, think that by our own righteousness that we are saved,
- As there is nothing that we can add or take away from God.
- In all truthfulness, we are nothing but a speck of dust on the earth
- (From ashes to ashes, & from dust to dust).
- And if look at our best efforts in life, and we examine them,
- We realize that we just aren’t good enough.
- There are just too many bad thoughts that enter our mind,
- Too many unkind or toxic words that exit our mouth.

- After every football game the coaching staff gathers around,
- And they take a look at the game films.
- They analyze every play that was made.
- Was it well executed or was an error made?
- Was there a play that shouldn't been called?
- Or possibly a good play that was never attempted?
- How about this? ... We come into church 7 days from now.
- And someone gets up and says, I've recorded your life for the last 7 days.
- We'll analyze every thought that came into your mind that you pondered,
- Review every word that came from your mouth,
- And every action that you took.
- Despite some possibly wonderful things we might have done,
- I'm 100% certain that here are many things that you and I might be
- Horribly embarrassed about, causing us to leave town the next day.
- Maybe it was a prideful or a lustful thought.
- Or an unkind and uncaring thought or action.
- It could be a myriad of things.
- The bottom line is that it is 100% impossible to think of ourselves
- As righteous... but unfortunately, many do.
- They think that they have tipped the scale in their favor.
- But, we certainly know that there is absolutely no way,
- That any of us could measure up to the standards of the written word.
- God sent Abraham out of his homeland, and sent him into a promised land.
- He had to leave everything behind and put all his trust in God.
- **And that was the starting point of his faith.**
- In our own lives, when we put our faith in Christ, we surrender ourselves,
- And put our trust and faith 100% in His hands,
- And He gives us a promise.
- But we have no assurances of how our lives are going to work out.
- We sacrifice many worldly things when we take up the cross of Christ.
- And when we follow the Lord, we will be blessed in this life,
- And for sure more in the next.
- And Abraham moved from place to place, living in a tent
- He didn't establish a permanent dwelling.
- He was given of a promised land... but at that time unable to yet inherit.
- It was a promise to his seed, yet he had no children.

- **Gen.15:1-6 - Later the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision, “Abram, don’t be afraid! I will protect you and reward you greatly.”² But Abram answered, “LORD All-Powerful, you have given me everything I could ask for, except children. And when I die, Eliezer of Damascus will get all I own.³ You have not given me any children, and this servant of mine will inherit everything.”⁴ The LORD replied, “No, he won’t! You will have a son of your own, and everything you have will be his.”⁵ Then the LORD took Abram outside and said, “Look at the sky and see if you can count the stars. That’s how many descendants you will have.”⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD was pleased with him.**
- God told Abraham, at 85 years of age, that he was going to have a son. .
- And as Romans 4:3 said, **“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”**
- By just believing, he was counted as being righteous.
- That’s what God was looking for.
- He was looking for faith.
- Like Abraham was justified by faith, we are as well.
- Not by the works that we do because we believe in Jesus,
- Not because we are transformed by His Holy Spirit,
- And not because we allow Him to lead us and follow.
- We are made right before God because he accounts it to us,
- Because we look to the blood of Jesus Christ
- **Ephesians 2:8-9 -⁸ You were saved by faith in God, and not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works should any man boast.**
- If we are humble and repentant, God forgives all of our sins,
- And does not count them against us.
- The slate becomes clean. - God forgets them.
- He looks at our faith and our belief in a savior
- And that accounts for righteousness.
- But because we are justified by faith,
- It doesn’t mean that we can go and do anything we want to do.
- **Gal. 5:17 -"But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!**
- Again, although we gain our liberty through Christ,
- We cannot hide behind the cloak of Christ.
- We are bound to Him, and are under subjection to the word of God.
- And because we are born again of the Holy Spirit

- We need to act in that manner.
- When we go back to Abraham, God told him at age 98,
- That his son was coming next year, at age 99.
- He must have had a lot of doubts, but he totally believed God.
- Just as Abraham trusted God, we need to do the same.
- Regardless of where we are on our journey of life
- Whether living in times of triumph, or of sorrow and despair,
- Even when we feel it is beyond our strength and power,
- We always have to hold on to hope,
- And know that God is always there for us, and He is.
- And sometimes, we feel that in our flesh
- That we cannot display the fruits of the Spirit,
- When we just cannot feel love for someone who is unlovable,
- When we don't have compassion and mercy for those who need,
- When our tank goes empty on patience,
- When joy seems to have disappeared from our bodies,
- When showing kindness escapes us,
- When we yearn to be selfish, instead of selfless,
- We need to look back at Abraham, and remember
- That despite all his obstacles - ⁹ **He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."**
- And again, it doesn't only apply to Abraham, but in verse ²³ **But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also.**
- In the times and turns of our lives, sometimes we find ourselves on a path
- That we would never have chosen,
- But the promise of God is that He will carry us through.
- Like Abraham, we are seeking for a joy that goes beyond this earth.
- We might have a lot of earthly rewards, we might have food in our bellies, clothes on our backs, and a roof over our heads,
- But there are others who don't have what we have,
- And it doesn't mean that they are not blessed.
- God's true blessing is the eternal life that is ours to behold.

- Paul told us, in Col 3:2, Set your affections on things from above, and not on things of this earth.
- It's not as easy in our days with all the glittering things of the earth
- Available to us at our beck and call.
- And all things of the world aren't bad.
- We rejoice in our relationships and the joys we might encounter,
- But we need to make sure that nothing comes between us
- And our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Our true promise is Jesus Christ, to be settled and grounded in His love.
- And getting back to Abraham:
- Look at what happened years later when God told him to go
- And sacrifice his son.
- He obeyed, and of course God spared him.
- Abraham's faith transformed him.
- He did things that were impossible to his own self.
- His faith and obedience to God never wavered.
- God is always with us.
- The Holy Spirit that is sealed in our hearts, so we know that we are His.
- Even when we are chastened, we know that we are His.
- We are secure in Christ as long as we look towards Him.
- And are striving to serve Him instead of being servants to sin.
- We can rest in that.
- He wants our faith to be one that transforms us by the renewing
- Of our minds. – I'm going to close with this last verse.
- **Romans 12:1-2 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**
- Close in prayer