

Justification by Faith

Romans 4:1-8 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."

❖ Introduction

- **Justification is a legal term meaning you have been declared right with God**
- **Are You an Expert on Justification?**
 - If not, then you should be!
 - If you were accused of a crime and didn't want to go to jail
 - How hard would you work to get yourself acquitted?
 - **You should know and understand the word Justification...**
 - You should make it your priority in life
 - **Because your justification before God is your only Hope!**
 - **This week at T4G Conference: Al Mohler said,**
 - **"Justification by faith alone is not one doctrine among others. It is not merely one way of describing the gospel. It is the gospel."**
- **Gather My Sin**
 - **In ten years... if I were to have a book of all my sins...**
 - All the sins of thought... Things I said, Things I did not do, Things I did do
 - ◆ All my sins...
 - Even the times I did not trust and wait on God
 - **With one page for every day...**
 - And there were some days I would need more than one page
 - I would have a book with 3,650 pages in it....
 - ◆ And I am 37...
 - ◆ So... let's take out the years that I didn't have a good understanding of right and wrong...
 - ◆ Starting at age 7... cause that makes the math easier...
 - **30 years: I would have a book with 10,950 pages**
 - Let's be nice to me and say I only sinned 10 times a day...
 - **And there are lots of sins to take into account...**
 - ◆ **Command 1... No other God's before God**
 - How many times have I put something else **first**
 - How many times was I **fearful** of what others would think of me for being godly
 - How many **harsh** words did I say or think?
 - How many wrong things have I **listened** to or **watched**
 - How many times did I put **other** things **before** God
 - ◆ **Command 5... how many times did I disobey my parents...**
 - Bear false witness, Commit adultery in my heart
 - Commit murder by hating without cause, Covet what was not mine
 - **How many times have I not given and been generous when I should have**
 - ◆ How about my pride... the times I wanted to make myself look good
 - ◆ When I wouldn't admit I am wrong to save face

- ◆ Told a story to favor me
 - ◆ Enjoyed the praise of man
 - ◆ Did something out of pride instead of loyalty to God
 - **We Sing a Song:**
 - ◆ The line: It's your breath on my lungs... so I pour out my praise, I pour out my praise
 - ◆ How many times have I praised others instead of God (It is God's Breath!!!)
 - ◆ How many times have I kept silent... when I should be thankful and pray
 - **How many times have I neglected Bible reading...**
 - ◆ Or prayer, Or bible Study with wife and kids
 - ◆ How many people have I passed over **sharing** the glorious gospel of Jesus
 - **My Sins have added up: If I were nice and gave myself just 10 per day (SO NICE!)**
 - **That is: 109,500 sins!!!!**
 - **The Scriptures say:**
 - **Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death...**
 - Given my growing list of sins... I am in big trouble...
 - **Court Time:**
 - When I stand before the Great Judge... the Almighty God
 - There will be a surplus of evidence against me... it will overflow
 - A terrible lawyer would have no problem with my case...
 - **He would present the Books... the evidence**
 - He would read through them...
 - There would be evidence that I did them all
 - **The Bible teaches God knows our hearts:**
 - ◆ **Jeremiah 17:10 I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."**
 - **Do You See My Problem?**
 - I am guilty before God and there is no defense for me.
 - If You were Honest it is the same for you...
 - **The Unbiblical Doctrine of Works Righteousness poses a problem for us**
 - **This Doctrine teaches that your works play a part in your right standing with God...**
 - You have initial faith... then you have works and penance
 - And all these kind of go on your account...
 - In the end you go to a purgatory to purge the of rest of sins...
 - **This doctrine is unbiblical... but it is also impractical...**
 - How would I ever overcome the Volume of my sins?
 - **Praise God for Justification by Faith Alone...**
 - For this is how God has worked toward us...
- ❖ **Outline:** Paul is Making an Argument and proving it... And a beautiful doctrine emerges
- **Paul is just trying to make a point...** a very important one... And He is going to use argument to do it
 - He does just what we would do...
 - Someone says something that we know isn't right... and it is important... so we rebut
 - **We say... You sure about that? Don't you remember this thing that happened?**
 - ◆ Remember how He did that?
 - ◆ That means this... same thing as doing this...
 - ◆ Not only that... but remember so and so... He said and did the same thing...
 - ◆ Look at what the results were...
 - **That is what Paul is doing...**

- 1) The Argument: What did Abraham gain according to works?
- 2) Answer: What do the Scriptures Say?
- 3) The Explanation: Works vs Faith
- 4) Another Example: David
- 5) The Gift: Sins Forgiven, covered, not counted

- Response: My Audience: When we are done...
 - 1) Those nominal Christians that need revival in their hearts...
 - should rejoice at these truths
 - They should respond by living more for Jesus
 - The Spirit would cause that
 - 2) Those who are living in their sin and haven't yet trusted only in Jesus
 - Hopefully the Spirit will awaken their hearts with these scriptures
 - 3) Those believers living in guilt of their sins...
 - You can move on... God has... why hold on to sin God isn't holding on to?

- ❖ 1) The Argument: What did Abraham gain according to works?
 - What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
 - Paul is simply trying to make the point:
 - Men are made right with God through Faith alone apart from works
 - This is an important argument b/c of where we have come from so far...
 - In chapter 1 he started out by expressing His love and confidence in the gospel
 - He said it was the power of God to bring about salvation
 - He continues to explain why it is so important...
 - In 1:18 He says it is because men are suppressing the truth in their ungodly actions...
 - ◆ They love their sins... so much that they do not care to hear the truth
 - He closes out that chapter by reminding readers:
 - ◆ That those who practice sin deserve to die
 - In chapter 2 he continues by saying God is going to judge rightly
 - He says God will judge with no partiality
 - He says judgment will come to those who had the laws of God and those without it
 - All will be held accountable... If they didn't have the law in hand... they had it in heart
 - Chapter 3 leads Paul to just state... EVERYONE IS GUILTY... all men everywhere
 - No person is righteous in God's eyes by their own merit
 - Roman 3:23 reminds us... "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
 - It is here that we see Paul begin to make the point...
 - ◆ That we can be justified by grace through faith
 - ◆ Romans 3:24-25 ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.
 - By grace received by faith
 - Finally... He ends chapter 3 saying... We have no room to boast... no room to brag
 - There is not one person who can stand and say... I did this... look at how good I have been
 - I deserve God's grace... I deserve God's favor...
 - Now... he wants to prove this to us... So He Argues... and in so doing...
 - He opens up to us the Beauty of this Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone
 - Paul uses Abraham to make a case:

- **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.**
- **Abraham was considered the earliest father of their people...**
 - They considered themselves his children... and children of the promise...
 - So Abraham is the perfect candidate

➤ **Paul Argues:** What was gained by Abraham according to the flesh?

- **What has Abraham obtained or what was found by Abraham**
 - It is the same idea that we see with Noah...
 - ◆ Noah had **found** favor with God... but how?
 - ◆ See Genesis 6:8
- **So... there is the question put to you... What has Abraham found....**
 - And then Paul gives you the possible means
 - The how He has found what He may have found
- **He says... did he gain anything according to the flesh**
 - Now this phrase simply means...
 - By outward workings... by his good deeds....
- **Abraham was a sinner...**
 - This we know for certain... because all people are...
 - But Abraham lived in a land with a lot of idols... so who knows about his character before faith
 - He could have been comparatively good...
 - But we do know that even after following God...
 - ◆ He lied, He feared, He didn't trust God... work in progress
- **So, Paul asks.. what did Abraham gain or find through His outward working?**
- **Paul then makes the point... if He did find favor with God by his works...**
 - He **would** have something to boast about...
 - See the verse... **If He was justified by works....**
 - ◆ Then he could **boast**...
- **But... this is not the case... He says... Not before God...**
 - He can't boast before God... there is no room for it... God knew Abraham

❖ **2) Answer: What do the Scriptures Say?**

- **³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham **believed** God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."**

➤ **So... it was His believing that found him favor before God**

➤ **Our Answer should always come from: But... What do the scriptures say?**

- Oh the trouble we are in today because we do not consult God's Word to us...
 - Oh if I had the time to prove to you the reliability and authority of the Bible...
 - That is for another day...
- **Here... we do see... that at least for the Christian...**
 - Consult the Word of God on these things...

➤ **How Sad:**

- That so many people fail to know the truth... Religious people
- People who go to church every week...
- People who claim to be Christians...
 - They do not know the truth of how to be Right Before God...
 - ◆ Or on social issues
 - ◆ They trust their own logic... they trust what media or friends say

➤ **Jesus confronted this in His day.... With people that actually read their Bibles**

- On 6 different occasions He confronted supposed Bible scholars
- **He would say: “Have you not read.... Have you not read?”**
 - That is the question I have for some of us...
 - ◆ Some of the unbiblical doctrine people believe in the church...
 - ◆ **I say: Have you not read? Have you not read your Bible?**
 - I do not mean to be condescending... But it **baffles** me

➤ **The Answer: Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness**

- This is a quote right from genesis 15.6
- Not from works is Abraham justified before God... there is another way

▪ **He Believed**

- **Now... this word here is pisteuo and it means: Believe or to put faith in**
 - ◆ To think to be true...
 - ◆ He thought what God said was true
 - ◆ Simple as that... He depended upon God
- **He heard the word of the Lord...**
 - ◆ And upon hearing... He believed... He trusted God
 - ◆ There is no mention of anything else He did...
- **This Simple Belief led to an amazing result....**
 - ◆ Remember Abraham is a sinner...
 - ◆ Maybe you place me in that spot with all my sins
 - ◆ Or maybe you and all your sins... Notice what happens

▪ **Counted to him As Righteous**

- **! BOOM ! That’s what the scriptures say right there!!!!**
- He believed and it was counted to him as righteousness...

▪ **Counted is an accounting term ok...**

- Sometimes translated “credited” or “imputed” or “reckoned”
- **Please try to understand it...**
 - ◆ Go back to my example of the books...
 - ◆ They were like a big ledger taking down all the wrong things I had done
 - ◆ One after the other was counted and written down...
 - ◆ A record was kept... an account of my actions

▪ **Here... there is something else counted on the books...**

- **Righteousness...**
- Abraham’s believing caused his accounting book to look different...
- God counted Abraham’s account as righteous **because** He believed

➤ **Follow the reasoning:**

- It is belief... or faith... that made it so that... God would count Abraham as Righteous
- So... he makes that quick answer of Abraham as proof...
 - But He goes further and tried to explain it better for them

❖ **3) The Explanation: Works vs Faith**

- **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 godly, his faith is counted as righteousness,**

➤ **The One Who Works**

- **Well... that person is owed by his employee...**
 - The one who works deserves to get paid for his work

- The employer isn't just being generous...
- He owes the worker because the worker worked for it...
- **Therefore... what he gets is not a gift... rather they are what he is owed...**
 - And the problem is that Paul has already proven no man right before God...
 - That all men have sinned... and they do not deserve a gift from God
 - Plus... the sheer amount of sin and its consequences are beyond our ability to pay

➤ **Now, On the contrary**

- **“the one who does not work but believes... his faith is counted as righteousness”**
- And this is exactly what was said of Abraham...
- Faith is counted by God as righteousness

➤ **Here is the doctrine laid out simply....**

- ***Faith or depending or trusting or believing in Jesus EQUALS being counted as righteous...***

➤ **Faith is the Avenue**

- **Whereby men are made right with God... without works... so we have no room to boast...**
 - Especially when we consider that God is the author of our faith to begin with!!!!

➤ **One more thing... What Does He believe in?**

- He believes: **“In him who justifies the ungodly...”**
- **He puts His trust in the God who does this...**
 - Abraham is already looking **forward** to Jesus...
 - ◆ As a matter of fact Jesus said in John 8 that Abraham rejoiced to see His day
- **Also note an amazing thing here...**
 - He justifies the ungodly...
 - This means you can not be considered good to be justified...
 - He justifies those that are ungodly...
- **You can not clean up your act so God will justify you....**
 - Do good and then God will accept you...
- **Rather:**
 - **Romans 5:8 God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

➤ **Recap: Ungodly people... well... they are ungodly... meaning they are sinful in their actions**

- Abraham was ungodly... then he believed God... He was not **then** made godly...
- Rather... He was **declared** by God to be in right standing with God
- **God makes a legal declaration that the person is counted as Righteous...**
 - Although they are sinners... and continue to be.... So don't boast!
 - That is what the doctrine of justification teaches...
- Sinners are justified and forgiven... because they have believed God

➤ **Paul does not stop there... He is going to offer up another example from the history of the Jews**

- **David...** // He is going to reemphasize the **exclusive** work of **faith** to save the person

❖ **4) Another Example: David**

- **⁶just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:**

➤ **Paul has used Abraham as an example of faith induced righteousness**

- Now He is going to use King David
 - He is going to say that David said the same thing
 - And this is how God worked in David as well

➤ **Paul uses David's words in Psalm 32 to point out:**

- The man is blessed if he is the man toward whom God
- **Counts righteousness apart from Works**

- **Counts righteousness apart from works**
 - The account will be credited as an account in good standing...
 - And this will be done **apart** from works...
 - Not one single good deed is needed for this to happen
- **It happens **apart** from works...**
 - Separate from them...
 - It is the picture we see from the thief on the cross...
 - **Example of thief: Expound**
- **This is clearly laid out:**
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9** ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - **1 Timothy 1:9** ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace,
- **Application:**
 - Glory in God today for the work He has done for us...
 - For the favor He has bestowed upon you...
 - Run from sin and honor God // God has done great things!...
 - **What is it they say?: If that doesn't set you on fire, then your wood is wet!**
 - **Let me remind you:**
 - If you have been made right with God:
 - ◆ God did not have to do that... He did it of his own free choice...
 - ◆ No where in scripture does it say any man ever made God be gracious to them
 - Because they were just so **darn** good...
 - No... that is heresy... and it is an evil concocted by Satan himself...
 - That we deserve the grace of God...
 - Please stop and get on your knees and ask God to forgive you of that arrogant sin
 - Ask God to help you see the error in your thinking!
- **Oh unforgiven sinner...**
 - **Taste and see that the Lord is good...**
 - That you must believe in Him...
 - You must believe in Jesus who lived a perfect life to fulfill the requirements of the law
 - Who died for your sins... so they would be counted on Him...
 - He put them on His account... And He paid for them with His very own blood
 - God became a man to die for us...
 - He rose from the grave defeating the power of death over man...
- **Do you truly and honestly believe that?**
 - If you do... God will credit your account Righteous... // And He will wipe away your debt!!!!

❖ 5) The Gift: Sins Forgiven, covered, not counted

- 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."
- We covered this in Psalm 32 last week...
- **Here is the Gift given to the believer... the reward... the blessing**
 - Sins forgiven, covered and not counted
- **2 Things have happened when the person believes**
 - They are simultaneous and either could be used to describe the other...
 - 1st we see the positive: God credits us as righteous
 - 2nd: we see the negative: He takes away the sins, He does not count them

- So... our sins are removed and we are also declared righteous
- Our account is credited with the righteousness of Jesus Himself!

➤ **Blessed is that person!**

➤ **Practical Application....**

- The reason I said this doctrine should produce revival in your soul
- The Word blessed means: that all is right with you and God
 - And you are to be happy in Him and delight in Him
- It does not mean that you are healthy or wealthy or even comfortable...
- The beauty of this doctrine is:
 - It works to cause you to delight and be happy in God...
 - So that when you are uncomfortable and in pain... you are right with God!
 - When you are poor... you are right with God
 - When sick... you are right with God

❖ **Objection: James and Dead Faith**

➤ **One objection may be... then why does James say we need works too...**

- If you have ever read James... you know He says something that seems to contradict this doctrine
- But... please... take the time to read and understand His argument...

➤ **Paul and James are arguing two different things...**

- And they use similar words but in different ways...
- I do not have the time to fully lay it out... and I have done so before...
- But for brevity sake... let me say a few things...

➤ **James teaches that people are justified by works... but what he means by justified is:**

- Their faith is proven by their works...
- He was arguing against a dead, dull and demonic faith
- True faith always has works... and that faith is proven or justified by works
- John Calvin wrote: "For the question with him is not, how men attain righteousness before God, but how they prove to others that they are justified, for his object was to confute hypocrites, who vainly boasted that they had faith."

➤ **Paul is teaching that our initial salvation comes about by faith alone apart from works**

- There are no works that commend us to God
- Faith obtains righteousness for us because there are no works good enough
 - Except the works of Jesus
- Our faith must be in the work of Jesus

➤ **So... use James to make sure the Faith you profess to have is real...**

- If it is, then it will absolutely lead to acts of Love...
- That is what He means by works... Your faith will create works for God

❖ **Summarize:**

- What a humbling of man doctrine and an exalting of the glories of God's grace doctrine
- **My books of sin:** Burned... removed from court... blank pages... cast into the seas... so far away we can't find them... shot into the depths of space
- **1) Faith is the non works avenue that declares me righteous in God's eyes**
- **2) Works do not earn me any favor with God**
- **3) Righteousness is counted apart from works**
- **4) God does not count the sins of those who Depend on Jesus**

❖ **Invitation: Do you want your books emptied?**