

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 4 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen in our study of Romans, Paul, as a prosecuting attorney, shows that man is a sinner separated from God.

He shows that the unrighteous heathen is condemned by creation.

He moves on and speaks of the self-righteous moralist who is condemned by his conscience.

And he then speaks of the super religious person who is condemned by the commandments.

The conclusion is, “**... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Romans 3:23.

But man has a hard time with this idea of grace. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

A preacher, long-departed from the truth of the gospel, told the following story to summarize the faith he taught. It seems that a frog one day fell into a pail of milk, and though he tried every conceivable way to jump out, he always failed. The sides were too high, and because he was floating in the milk he could not get enough leverage for the needed leap. So he did the only thing he could do. He paddled and paddled and paddled some more. And *oila!* – his paddling had churned a pad of butter from which he was able to launch himself to freedom. The preacher’s message was: “Just keep paddling, keep on working, keep on doing your best, and you will make it.”

We smile at this exaggerated simplification, but this actually describes our American “man on the street” folk religion quite well. Despite the fact that “Amazing Grace” is our favorite hymn, most people think that if you just do your best you will somehow make it to Heaven. Modern man is, as a matter of fact, deeply hostile to the concept of justification by faith alone through God’s grace. He is much more comfortable with the motto: “We get our salvation the old-fashioned way. We earn it!” Justification through the “good life” – that computes.

Such thinking is, of course, nothing new. It is endemic to human nature and has characterized religious thinking from time immemorial. It was the received wisdom, the conventional thinking, of the Jews in the time of Jesus and Paul.

- R. Kent Hughes, Romans – Righteousness from Heaven, p. 89

People can believe whatever they want, but it does not mean it is the truth. We have the Word of God to show us what is right, what is truth.

And the reality is, and make no mistake about this, man, left alone is doomed. But God doesn’t leave him there. God steps in and justifies man, declares him righteous by faith in Jesus Christ.

As we concluded our study last week, Paul said this, **“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”** Romans 3:28-31.

In other words, we are not saved by keeping the Law, by doing good works, we are only saved by believing and receiving Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Not only that, but this free gift is for both Jew and Gentile, it is there for the world to receive.

That doesn't negate the Law, for the Law is good but man is not, he can't keep the Law. Thus, the Law shows man that he is a sinner separated from God and it points him to the Savior, to Jesus Christ, thus establishing the Law as Paul said.

Now for the Jews in Rome, they may have a question for Paul regarding this issue. ***“How does this teaching, this doctrine of justification by faith relate to our history? You say that the Law and the Prophets gave witness to this teaching, but what about Abraham? Was he justified by works or by faith?”***

That is what Paul is going to answer next. You see, as we move into Romans chapter 4 Paul is going to give us two examples of Jewish men who were justified by faith and not by works.

Paul is going to be looking at Abraham, the Father of the Jews.

And then he will look at David, the King of the Jewish people.

These were the two heavy hitters of the Jewish faith, highly respected by the Jews, and thus, the way they were saved will show the Jews and Gentiles how they and how we are to be saved.

With that said, let's begin reading in Romans chapter 4, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

ROMANS 4

VERSES 1-2

Abraham was a heavy hitter in the Jewish faith. So Paul is going to show them and us that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works. He is going to examine this highly esteemed prophet of God.

The thing is, if Abraham was justified by works he could then boast about how hard he worked, what a good person he was and that is why he was allowed into heaven! He can try to boast like that before man, but God won't accept it. Why is that?

As Paul has already said, **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** Romans 3:23. And yes, even Father Abraham!

You see, as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** There is no room for boasting, none at all. Salvation is a grace gift that we do not deserve!

Therefore, salvation is only found in Jesus and thus God won't accept anything else.

In fact, Paul tells us in Galatians 6:14a, **“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .”**

And once again, and I think we do need to be reminded of this, there is no room for us to glory in our flesh, only in the finished work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, and His resurrection from the dead that assures us of life in Him!

Keep in mind that Abraham was an idol worshiping Gentile before God called him!

And now Paul is going to show them what the Scriptures say of Abraham and his faith. Not what someone may believe, but what the Word of God says from the Old Testament Scriptures!

VERSE 3

Paul goes back to the Old Testament to show us the faith of Abraham. And as you can see, the Old Testament does not say Abraham was declared righteous because of his good works or the keeping of the Law. The Law was not even around yet, it was still some 430 years or so down the road. Instead, Genesis 15:6 says that, Abraham “**... believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.**”

That is interesting to me because the Jewish rabbis believed that “Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord.”

And “We find that Abraham our father had performed the whole Law before it was given.”

Now that is interesting to me because, as we have seen, it was that Abraham believed God and not good works to make him righteous before God. And yet, they ignore what the Scriptures are saying to believe their own doctrine. Very dangerous and yet, many go down this path.

Not only that but keep in mind that when God called Abraham from the Ur of the Chaldeans into the land of Canaan, he partly obeyed God for he stayed in Haran for 15 years until his father Terah died.

During a time of famine in Canaan, Abraham went down to Egypt with his wife, lied to Pharaoh, telling him that Sarah was his sister not his wife because he was afraid that Pharaoh might kill him to take his wife. Instead, he just gave her to him! Thus, he lied before Pharaoh.

Also, he committed adultery with Hagar, Sarah's maid to help God out, to get a son since the womb of Sarah was barren.

What is my point? It is simple. Abraham was not perfect, he did not keep the Law before it was given to Moses. In fact, he fell far short of keeping the Law, not trusting in the promises of God, but he did always return to the Lord.

Now if he was justified by the Law and yet broke the Law, it didn't matter how many good things he did. He was a transgressor of the Law and he was guilty before God!

Now if Abraham was not justified by works, then how was he justified?

Paul tells us by faith in God, he believed and that was accounted to him for righteousness. That word "**accounted**" is LOGIZOMAI (log-id'-zom'-ahee) in the Greek and it is a legal term speaking of crediting something into someone's account.

Here we see God credit into the account of Abraham righteousness that is based upon faith and not works.

In other words, Abraham was declared righteous by God before the Law was established; it was still some 430 years down the road as I have said!

Now some may be thinking, "How could that be that Abraham was saved by faith and not by works?"

First of all, here in Romans chapter 4 verse 3 Paul quotes out of Genesis 15:6, so the Scriptures testify that it is of faith and not of works, it is not a New Testament idea.

But what did Abraham believe in?

The promises of God he believed in! And even more specifically, the coming of the Messiah, the coming of Jesus.

How do I know that? Again, let's look at the Word of God.

In Genesis 22:18 the Lord said to Abraham, **“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”**

Now we may miss the point, but Paul doesn't, for in Galatians 3:16-18 he tells us, **“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”**

Do you see that? Abraham believed in the coming Messiah and that was accounted to him for righteousness.

It is as Jesus said in John 8:56, **“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”** God has never provided any means of justification except by grace through faith in Him!

The Old Testament saints, those who died prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, died believing in the coming Messiah. For us today, we look back at the finished work of the Messiah. But salvation remains by faith and not by works!

VERSES 4-5

Please understand that grace and works are in opposition to each other. Grace speaks of receiving something freely, salvation is a free gift of God. On the other end of the spectrum we see works and works speak of earning merit before God. God owes you something because of what you have done!

The Greek word for “**grace**” is CHARIS and Wuest expounds on this word like this, “Signified in classical authors a favor done out of the spontaneous generosity of the heart without any expectation or return. Of course, this favor was always done to one’s friend, never to an enemy . . . But when *charis* comes into the New Testament, it takes an infinite leap forward, for the favor God did at Calvary was for those who hated Him.” Exactly!

Think of it like this, for Paul’s point is basically, “If I work for you, put in my 8 hours of work, you are legally obligated to pay me my wages, you owe me for the work I did.”

Now some cults believe this works relationship, a works salvation by going door-to-door or on their mission work. If that were true, then God would owe you salvation, He would be a debtor to you, but that is not that case, God is a debtor to no man!

Grace, our salvation is a free gift of God and as soon as we work for our salvation, it is no longer a free gift, but God owes us something. That is wrong, there is no boasting in what we have done but what He has done for us!

It would not longer be amazing grace but amazing me, look at what I have done!

Now please understand that Paul is not encouraging laziness, all he is saying is you can’t work your way into heaven. The only way to enter in is by faith in Jesus.

Abraham and those who believe with him were looking ahead to the coming Messiah; we look back and see that the Messiah has come! We see the finished work; they looked forward to the finished work!

Now some read this and come to the conclusion, “Great, I can do whatever I want! It doesn’t matter; it is all covered by the blood!”

You know what, that is very true, you can do whatever you want.

But let me also say this, if that is the desire of your heart, if you desire to do all kinds of evil, if the motivation of your heart is your flesh, then you need to do a heart check to see if you are saved!

You see, your belief’s will be manifested in your works, they don’t save you, they just show that you are saved!

James put it this way, “**Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**”
James 2:17.

I like the way that Chuck Smith summed this up for us. He wrote,

Does that mean then that I have a free ride, a free ticket, it doesn’t matter what I do as long as I believe in Jesus Christ? Yes, as long as you believe in Jesus Christ, your belief will be manifested by your works. But the works don’t make you righteous. They don’t save you. But they are the fruit of that faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

So we see a beautiful balance between Paul and James. Paul tells you that God accounts us righteous by our faith in Jesus Christ. And he is right. But James tells you that a true faith in Jesus Christ will be manifested by works, if it is a true faith.

That it will be displayed or demonstrated by works that are in keeping with what you believe. You see, I may say that I believe in certain things, but if my works don't line up with what I say I believe, then there is reason to question, do I really believe it? You see if I said I believe someone has planted a bomb in this pulpit tonight, that is set to go off in two minutes. It's going to blow this place apart. And if I just kept talking to you, you'd say oh he really doesn't believe it. And you would be right. I mean if I really believed it, I'd say everybody out of here, you know! There are exits all around, you know, get out of the place. It's going to go up! And I'd be out the back door. You see, wow, he really believes it.

So your works come from your faith and they prove the genuineness of that faith. But it isn't the works that make me righteous, it's just because I have that righteousness through faith in Christ because I have a true belief in Him. I believe that He died for my sins. I believe that I am destined to spend eternity in the glory of His kingdom with Him. I believe that He loves me so much that He gave Himself. And thus I respond to that love. And to the belief that I have. It's in harmony and shows the faith.

- Pastor Chuck Smith

Paul now turns to David another hero of the Jewish faith and a man who was born after the Law of Moses was given, and Paul is going to say that David is saying the same thing. His work did not save him, but his faith in the coming Messiah did! Listen to what Paul is saying here.

VERSES 6-8

Paul now takes a few verses to show us King David, another heavy hitter of the Jewish faith, and how King David was justified by faith and not by works!

And make no mistake about it, King David of the Old Testament knew what it was like to be a guilty sinner. He knew the seriousness of sin and how good it is to be truly forgiven.

In this Psalm that Paul is quoting from, David committed at least 3 sins here; he broke at least 3 commandments.

First, he coveted Bathsheba.

Then he committed adultery with her.

And then he had her husband, one of his mighty men murdered.

He committed two capital crimes here and should have been put to death for it, according to what God's Word tells us. But here we see the grace of God extended to David. He did not deserve life, he deserved death. But God freely extended to David life just as He does with us!

Now I have talked with a person who said that David never sinned, he was perfect but listen to what Psalm 32:5 says, **"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' And You forgave the iniquity of my sin."**

The Scriptures are clear on that, David was a sinner, like all of mankind except for Jesus! And thus, his sins had separated him from God!

And look at what David is not saying here. First of all, if David cried out for justice before God, according to the Law he would have been put to death, as I have said.

Thus, David cries out for God's mercy and God extended mercy to David, not on the basis of David's good works, but upon his faith, which was then accounted as righteousness to David!

And in Psalm 32:1-2, which Paul quotes here, David says **"Oh how happy is the person who has his lawless deeds forgiven."** **"Oh how happy is the person whose sins are forgiven."** **"Oh how happy is the person whom the Lord does not put his sins into an account!"**

That is something to be happy about, God's mercy and grace that He extends to us by faith!

Of this, Lenski tells us: "No sinner, and try he ever so hard, can possibly carry his own sins away and come back cleansed of guilt. No amount of money, no science, no inventive skill, no armies of millions, nor any other earthly power can carry away from the sinner one little sin and its guilt. Once it is committed, every sin and its guilt cling to the sinner as close as does his own shadow, cling to all eternity unless God carries them away."

You see, we are blessed, we are happy not by what we have done, but what God has done and by faith God has imputed righteousness into our account!

And here is the wonderful news. Once we are justified before God, there is no record of our sins. Not even one! That is what God has done, He has paid in full the debt for our sins, all of them, and thus, there is no longer any record of them!

"Now what about Gentiles, how are they saved?" That is the next question that Paul anticipated and will answer for us.

VERSES 9-12

First of all, Paul is saying that Abraham was counted righteous by God because of his faith not because of Abraham being circumcised.

How do I know that? Because the promise that was given in Genesis 15:6 took place some 14 years before God instructed Abraham that he was to be circumcised, which means Abraham was justified by faith and not by a ritual.

Now, for the Jewish people of Paul's day, the significance of circumcision was more than social. It was the entry point for a life lived under the Law of Moses. Remember what Paul said in Galatians 5:3, "**And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.**"

That means if Abraham was justified by works, through circumcision, he would have to keep the whole Law of God and we know he didn't. He was not saved by works but by faith!

Now, in saying that. It tells us also that Gentiles can receive the blessings, as Paul quoted David, "**Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.**" Romans 4:7-8.

You see, by faith and not by works or rituals, just as the Jews are saved so the Gentiles are also saved!

Being Jewish and circumcised did not make you a child of Abraham. But believing in the Messiah did.

Folks, I don't care if you were baptized as an infant or even as an adult, or you did this ritual or that ritual, walked on hot coals to some shrine, even nailed yourself to a cross, that will not save you!

Jesus alone saves by believing and receiving Him into your life. That means all who believe, all who are justified by faith, are spiritual descendants of Abraham and a Jew who does not believe is not a descendant of Abraham!

David Guzik put it like this,

“**Our father Abraham**” is an important phrase, one that the ancient Jews jealously guarded. They did not allow a circumcised Gentile convert to Judaism refer to Abraham as “our father” in the synagogue. A Gentile convert had to call Abraham “your father” and only natural born Jews could call Abraham “our father.” Paul throws out that distinction, and says that through faith, all can say, “**our father Abraham.**”

It must have been a shock for the Jewish readers of this letter to see that Paul called Abraham the father of **uncircumcised** people! **Faith**, not circumcision, is the vital link to Abraham. It is far more important to have Abraham’s faith (and the righteousness imputed to him because of it) than it is to have Abraham’s circumcision.

- David Guzik

VERSES 13-15

As we have seen in Galatians 3:17, the Law was still some four hundred and thirty years down the road from Abraham, so Abraham couldn’t be justified by the Law.

And if you could be justified by the Law, if that were possible, then there is no need for faith and then why even believe in the promises of God!

The problem is that you can’t be justified by keeping the Law and verse 15 can literally be translated, “**The Law keeps on producing wrath.**” Why is that?

Because the Law sets the standard, not just the outward observance, but the heart and thus, only Jesus could and did keep it, we can't!

It is as Paul has said in Romans 3:20, **“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”**

Again, in Galatians 2:16 Paul tells us, **“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”**

So the Law continually shows us we are transgressors, we are sinners before God, it doesn't make us holy, it just shows us we are not!

That means that the promise to Abraham was given purely through God's grace. Abraham did not earn it or merit it.

And the same is true today. God justifies the ungodly because they believe His gracious promise, not because they obey His Law. The Law was not given to save men, but to show men that they need to be saved. (Rom. 4:15)

Now some may argue, “If that is true, which it is, then why does Paul say in the last half of Romans 4:15, **“... For where there is no law there is no transgression.”**?”

Doesn't that make it sound like we would be better off not to have the Law, then we would not be guilty before God?

That is not what Paul is saying here.

Think of it this way. You are driving at a reasonable speed and there are no signs posted on what the speed limit is, you are not going to get a speeding ticket, you had no sign to tell you that you have broken the law. Not that you just didn't see the speed limit sign, there were none at all.

The thing is, the word “**transgression**,” PARABASIS (par-ab'as'is) in the Greek, speaks of an overstepping, a violation of a specifically stated commandment.

Thus, the role of the Law is to just make clear what God desires, what He demands.

But God has also placed in each of our hearts what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, and we can't even keep that, so we are already guilty, the Law just shows you how guilty you are before God!

Make no mistake about it, the Law brings about God's wrath, not His blessing. It condemns those who fail to keep its commandments perfectly and continuously. And since none can do that, all who are under the Law are condemned to death. It is impossible to be under the Law without being under the curse. And yet, we see those who attempt to do that even today!

VERSE 16

Remember what we read in Ephesians 2:8-9, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**”

Now, if you want to get technical about it, we are not saved by faith, we are saved by God's grace and grace is appropriated into our lives through faith.

And think about it, grace and faith go together just as Law and works go together.

Grace and Law are the principles and then faith and works are the means we pursue these principles for our relationship with God, one leading to life and the other to death!

It is as Spurgeon said, “Grace and faith are congruous [agreeable], and will draw together in the same chariot, but grace and merit are contrary the one to the other and pull opposite ways, and therefore God has not chosen to yoke them together. He will not build with incongruous materials, or daub with untempered mortar. He will not make an image partly of gold and partly of clay, nor weave a linsey-woolsey garment: his work is all of a piece and all of grace.”

Paul also says that this salvation by grace through faith is “sure” and it is a Greek word meaning “firm, of force, steadfast, sure.”

We can have assurance of our salvation because it is not based upon us being so good, living a certain way, but because He is so good and what He has promised He is able to bring to pass!

John tells us, “**These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.**” I John 5:13.

And Jesus said, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.**” John 5:24.

Thus, all who believe, all those who have the faith of Abraham, will be saved!

On the other hand, if we were saved by works, we would never know for sure if we were saved or not. It would always be a question; did we do enough good works to get in or how much do we need to do to get in?

God has given us assurance of our salvation because it is based in Him and not in us and He is faithful to bring to pass what He has promised! We are not!

VERSES 17-18

Here we see that God supernaturally made Abraham the father of the nation of Israel and He also supernaturally made Abraham the spiritual father of many nations. God made a promise to Abraham and also brought it to pass!

What I also want you to see is the tense of this verse. God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 17:5, saying, “**I have made thee**” Now keep in mind that in reality it hadn’t yet happened. God speaks His promise in the past tense, even though from our perspective it hasn’t taken place because so certain is His promise, it’s as though it has already happened. I like that!

Pastor Chuck Smith put it like this, “I’m greatly comforted when God speaks about me as righteous, justified, glorified, holy, pure, and saintly. God can talk about such things before they exist, because He knows they will exist.”

Also, when God speaks of giving life to the dead, calling into existence that which does not exist, I believe it speaks not only of creating life in the first place, but also of our salvation, that God sees what we will become, He gives to us life and He is molding and shaping us into His image.

That is what John tells us in I John 3:2, “**Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**”

Thus, that which seems hopeless, when God is added to the picture, there is hope, there is confidence that God can do what He has promised.

Spurgeon puts this into practice as he says, “All true believers, like Abraham, obey. Obedience is faith in action. You are to walk in the steps of faith of father Abraham. His faith did not sit still, it took steps; and you must take these steps also by obeying God because you believe him. That faith which has no works with it is a dead faith, and will justify no one.”

VERSE 19-22

We look back and read of this man Abraham and what faith. Did he struggle at times? You bet he did, just like we all do. But what faith.

And here is the thing. Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was past the age of child bearing when she became pregnant. Well past the age of child bearing.

In Hebrews 11:11-12, we are told of the faith of Sarah as well. We are told, **“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude - innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”**

Thus, to them, the promise of God, of having a son, was impossible by their own efforts, and it is at this point, and many times in our own lives, that God steps in and says, ***“It’s show time!”***

You see, Abraham and Sarah could not take credit for their son Isaac; it was a gift of God!

Not that all children are not a gift of God, they are, but God did intervene and give them this son when it was humanly impossible for them to have children!

And Abraham was strengthened at God's promise to him and I'm sure even more so when that promise came to pass!

The question for us as we go through impossible situations is ***"How big is your God?"***

And once again we see that it is through faith once again that God will impute righteousness into our account apart from the Law, apart from baptism, apart from this or that. Just by believing and receiving Jesus Christ into your life, it is a gift, not of works!

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**

He took our sin, paid the debt that was due us on the cross of Calvary and He freely gave to us His righteousness by faith.

VERSES 23-25

Keep in mind, and Paul reminds us, that the story of Abraham was not just for him, but it is for us also, we can learn from it what faith is all about. Let me show you what I mean, the lesson that God has for us.

You see, Satan tells people, ***"You shall not surely die!"*** and God says, ***"You will die in your sins apart from Jesus!"***

Who do you think people believe, who do you think people listen to?

Tragically, they listen to Satan's words, even though they don't believe it is of Satan and these ideas of a works relationship with God has infiltrated many churches and it is in every cult.

They may say you need Jesus and then there is the ***"But . . ."*** the other things they add to the finished work.

What do you need to do to be saved?

Paul said this in Romans 10:9-13, **“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’”**

That is how you are saved – *by* grace alone *through* faith *in* Christ alone!

Pastor Chuck put it like this,

Now, we are always faced with, “Will I believe God’s word or not?” You see God says one thing and Satan comes along and says another. And Satan will seek to put you under condemnation. He’ll say, you are a rotten sinner. You have failed so many times. You have no right to ask God for His help. You have no right to come to God. Look how many times, you’ve failed Him. You might just as well forget it. God’s not going to forgive you. And am I going to believe Satan? Or am I going to believe God? Who said if I’ll just confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead, I will be saved! That God will impute righteousness to me apart from my failings. God justifies the ungodly!

- Pastor Chuck Smith

Now I am not negating our sin. Paul clearly shows us that our sins have separated us from God and we all have sinned, we all have fallen short of the glory of God. And it doesn’t matter if you miss it by a few inches or a million miles, you still missed the mark of perfection that God requires of us.

You see, our offenses were the problem that needed to be dealt with and our justification is the result that God has raised us by Christ's resurrection.

C. H. Mackintosh put it this way,

Abraham was called to believe in a promise, whereas we are privileged to believe in an accomplished fact. He was called to look forward to something which was to be done; we look back on something that is done, even an accomplished redemption, attested by the fact of a risen and glorified Savior at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

- C. H. Mackintosh

Let me sum this up like this,

In chapter 4, Paul presented several irrefutable reasons why justification is by faith: (1) Since justification is a gift, it cannot be earned by works (vv. 1-8). (2) Since Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, circumcision has no relationship to justification (vv. 9-12). (3) Since Abraham was justified centuries before the Law, justification is not based on the Law (vv. 13-17). (4) Abraham was justified because of his faith in God, not because of his works (vv. 18-25).

- Walvoord & Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 455

I think you can clearly see that in Romans chapter 4 Paul clearly demonstrated that in no way does the Old Testament contradict the gospel of salvation by grace through faith. Instead the gospel is the *fulfillment* of the Old Testament, and Abraham – justified through faith – is our pattern.

It is as Jesus said in John 8:56, **“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”**

And I will leave you with this. Are you glad, are you rejoicing in seeing the risen Lord, for Abraham was rejoicing in what was coming, and we should be rejoicing in what the Lord has done. Are you?