

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 27TH-28TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

FAITH, NOT WORKS (ROMANS 4:1-8)

FATHER OF THE FAITH

In chapter 3 Paul tells us that we are saved by grace and faith. We are incapable of saving ourselves through our works. Paul uses Abraham as an example.

- God justifies no one on the basis of works because no one's works are righteous. Only by faith and grace could Abraham have been justified by God.

WORKS ARE IMPORTANT!

Works do not save us, but true, saving faith always results in fruit and obedience (James 2:20, Matt. 7:16).

- **A Christian is one who stops working to be saved, not one who stops working.**
- Working to be saved will lead to boasting and pride (or to despair and self-hatred when we fail).

ABRAHAM'S FAITH

Genesis 15:6 says, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness." There were no 10 commandments or written instruction.

- We don't have to know a lot to be saved, just faith. **As our relationship grows, He will give us wisdom on how to navigate this life.**
- A saving faith is belief in, trust in, obedience to, and reliance on Jesus.

BLESSED FORGIVENESS

David's reasons to boast in himself: a king, brought peace, and established Jerusalem as his capital.

David's reasons to be crushed by his sins: an adulterer, and through conspiracy, a murderer (2 Samuel 11).

- Paul quotes Psalm 32 about God's grace to forgive "lawless acts" and "never charge" us with sin if we repent.

WE CAN ALL RELATE TO DAVID

We have all made mistakes. Romans 1:28-31 describes not just David's sins, but ours as well: greed, envy, murder, inventors of evil, arrogant, heartless, and ruthless.

- If we have saving faith, we can be honest about our life, repent, and He will embrace us. **We will receive forgiveness because God is gracious!**

GRACE, NOT LAW (ROMANS 4:9-17)

"IT WAS NOT AFTER, BUT BEFORE!"

Abraham was counted as righteous in Genesis 15:6 and circumcised in Genesis 17. Salvation wasn't from the OT circumcision, but from a change of heart.

- After the promise, it was 14 years until circumcision and 430 years until the law.
- Circumcision didn't add to Abraham's salvation, it simply attested to it.

OUTWARD WORKS FOLLOW INWARD CHANGE

The word circumcision can be replaced by outward works. The reason Abraham got circumcised was because God told him to. It was an outward response to an inward change.

- Abraham wasn't saved by his works, but because he was saved by faith and grace, he responded by obeying God and working to advance His kingdom.

"NOT THROUGH THE LAW"

If fulfillment of the promise depends on obedience to the law, it will never happen, for people can never obey the law adequately.

- The promise is righteousness by faith.
- It will be fulfilled by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). If righteousness could be obtained by anything other than faith, then it's worthless.

LOOK AT ME CULTURE

In our achievement-oriented world, giving faith its necessary central place isn't easy. Some are tempted in **what we do and how our "doing" is so impressive.** Such an attitude toward God breeds serious problems.

- Doing God's will is a necessary result of faith, but don't lose sight of God's gracious gift of salvation.

THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus...neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ (Gal. 3:26-29).

- The church is called to be countercultural, in which the usual barriers – race, national background, economic status, etc. – have no relevance at all.

GOD'S POWER, NOT HUMAN EFFORT (ROMANS 4:18-25)

APPEARANCES

"He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body to be already dead (100 years old) and also the deadness of Sarah's womb."

- Faith isn't opposed to reason, but it is sometimes opposed to feelings and appearances. Faith is going on something despite our weakness and our feelings.

FOCUS ON GOD

Abraham pondered and considered the power of God. He believed that the God who had promised him a child was "the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were" (v 17).

- In the middle of our trials, where is our focus? If it's not on God, we will not survive. There will be "great collapse." (Matt. 7:27)

THE WORD OF GOD

Abraham was "fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do" (v 21). Believing God is not simply thinking about God, but trusting in His word.

- Take God at His word even when there is nothing else. Feelings, popular opinion, and common sense may contradict His promise. We have to hold onto God's Word!

FULLY CONVINCED

Abraham's faith was empowered by contemplating God's power. **The more Abraham looked at who he was and who God was, the more fully convinced he became** that God was able to do what He promised.

- There was nothing in Abraham that gave him strong faith, but there was everything in God that gave him strong faith.

WE CAN ALL RELATE TO ABRAHAM

Abraham did not always live out his faith, his obedience was not perfect, his trust fluctuated; but his faith was never extinguished. **He held onto God's promises.**

- Not a perfect life, but a life which clings onto what God has said. A life that continues to run to God when everything else will fail.

WHAT ARE WE ASKED TO BELIEVE IN?

Abraham was asked to believe what he had never seen. We are asked to believe what many witnesses have seen and verified.

- Christ's resurrection is a gift for people to receive the same justification by faith that Abraham received. Do we have an urgency to share the good news with our neighbors?

RESURRECTION

"He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

- Only an atoning sacrifice can deal with the sin question, and only the resurrection proved that He was the sacrifice that God accepted. To seek salvation by our own works would be to negate the perfect works of Christ on our behalf.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS GIFT?

- Non-believers: Ask questions. Keep searching. We can't save ourselves.
- Christians: Do we have an urgency in us to share the good news with our neighbors? Do we understand that every soul matters?
- All: When we look at this gift, does it bring us to our knees in surrender?

WHAT'S OUR MOTIVE?

- Are we working to earn God's love?
- Are we working from an overflow of God's love for us?
- There's nothing we can do to make God love us more or less. Do we believe this? What would it look like to rest in this?
- Do we believe Jesus when He said, "It is finished?"

ARE WE FULLY CONVINCED?

- Seek first the kingdom of God, all things will be provided for you (Matt. 6:33).
- Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matt 11:28).
- You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have overcome the world (John 16:33).