

TRUSTING GOD FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

Romans 4:1-25

Rom. 3— God's given eternal life as a gift—No cost *to us*...

It wasn't FREE— It cost Jesus *everything*!

Prncpl of salvation by faith declared 3:21-31

Principle of salvation by faith illustrated 4

Faith & O.T. saints 4:1-8

1-5 Abraham—*ideal man* from Jews' perspective.

If anyone could earn God's favor, it'd be *Abraham*.

What does OT say about *him*? **1-3** “What shall we say that *Abe our forefather*, discovered in this matter? ²If *Abe* was justified by works, he had something to boast about —but not before God.

³What does Scripture say? “*Abe be-lieved God, & it was credited to him as righteousness.*”

So, what do we learn from Abraham?

Salvation has always been by faith.

Not even *Abe*. earned salvation by works.

4-5 Abraham didn't earn a fair wage; he was given a gift.

“Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift but as an obligation. ⁵However, to the man who does not work but **trusts God** who justifies the wicked, **his faith** is credited as righteousness.”

Paying salary isn't gracious—we *earn* it! They owe it

But salvation is gift! We could *never* earn it!

6-8 David—Another leader God makes promises to.

“David says the same thing when he speaks of the bless-edness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

Shows **blessing knowing God counts us righteous, without counting our works.**

Content are NOT people who never sin;

We're content because we're forgiven!

Scripture lays David's shortcomings out for all to see.

He isn't sinless! But he IS forgiven!

***Justification by faith; not works* => content**

How does circumcision relate to faith? 9-12 “Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We've been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It wasn't after, but before! ¹¹He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteous-ness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he's father of all who believe but haven't been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹²He's also father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”

He's declared righteous before he's circumcised

Circumcision's a sign; seal confirms righteous-ness

God *already* credited him because of faith!

He's saved by faith => he's father of *all* believers,

Prerequisite for *anyone* to be Abe's child: faith

How does God's promise relate to faith? 4:13-17

13-15 *"It wasn't through the law that Abraham & his offspring received the promise that he'd be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value & the promise is worthless, ¹⁵because law brings wrath. Where there's no law there's no transgression."*

God's promise based on faith, not law

Law & faith contradict. If one's true, eliminates other.

**If blessing depended on law, law would condemn
& promise would be useless**

16-17 *"The promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace & may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who're of the law but also to those who're of the faith of Abraham. He's father of us all. ¹⁷As it's written: "I've made you father of many nations." He's our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead & calls things that aren't as though they were."*

He's father of *all* believers, under law & not under law

It's not faith that saves us. It's the object of our faith.

Great faith in **rickety chair** won't hold us!

By trusting **thin ice**, some have actually "died by faith!"

If I trust **car**, but brakes are bad, I may "die by faith."

We must trust worthy object.

Abraham trusts God who gives life to dead things

Trusts God who sees what hasn't yet come to pass.

Not trusting his abilities. He's trusting God's promises!

Trusting **Jesus** leads to eternal life; *NOT* trusting selves!

Faith & obstacles 18-22 Abe's faith sets example:

18-22 *"Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed & so became father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about 100 yrs old—& that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he didn't waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith & gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."*

Circumstances give Abraham cause to doubt

Abraham doesn't focus on obstacles

Abraham focuses on God's FAITHFULNESS.

He's convinced God keeps His promise.

God responds to Abraham's faith by:

(1) Giving him what He promised

(2) Crediting his faith as righteousness

God's promise isn't limited to salvation.

Promise Abraham believes isn't about salvation.

He trusts God to give him a son, as He promised.

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO KEEP ALL HIS PROMISES.

We struggle when God doesn't do what we expect

People misled to believe what God never promised!

Some believe prayer is a means to manipulate God;

His purpose: bring US into conformity with HIS will
 Some claim: ***“God wants to make you rich.”***

Prosperity is biblical concept.

Biblical prosperity doesn't focus on ***riches & stuff!***

—centers on ***Him, enjoying*** what He gives us.

Some think **if 2 or 3 agree** about ***anything***, we get it

Man-centered view: if enough people “gang up on God,” we can get anything we want.

If 5 agree, “I get Mercedes today, next week you get 1!

Essence of prayer: *“Thy will be done on earth, as in heaven*

Seeking God's will; believing God to fulfill ***His*** purpose

Prayer brings our desires to conform with ***His*** desires

Some people take promises out of context

People take God's promise to a person; claim it as ours

“Every promise in book is mine!” Some *aren't* mine!

Glad God's promise to Abe. in **Gen. 18:10** *isn't* mine!

“Your wife will have a son” in her old age!

Study carefully; be sure we understand what God says

To whom is God speaking? Context? What's God say?

Note conditions attached to God's promises.

Trust God; He's *faithful to keep His promises!*

Faith & our destiny 23-25 *“The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins & was raised to life for our justification.”*

You think *Abraham's* case was hopeless?!! Look at *ours*!

We're as dead spiritually as Sarah's womb

Yet **God** promises to give us eternal life, if we trust Him

PRACTICAL LESSONS FOR US

God's faithful to keep his promises to US too!

When *we* trust Jesus, God credits *our* faith as righteousness—sees *US* dressed in Christ's righteousness

It was *faith alone* for Abraham —*faith alone* for David

It's *faith alone* for pagans like us!

It's *always* been based on *trusting Jesus alone*!

Horatius Bonar: [19th C. Pastor in Free Church of Scotland]

Thy *work alone*,... Can ease this weight of sin.

Thy *blood alone*,... Can give me peace within.

Thy *grace alone*,... To me can pardon speak.

Thy *power alone*,... Can this sore bondage break.

I bless the Christ of God. **I rest** on love divine.

And, with unfalt'ring lip & heart, ***I call this Savior mine!***

How about US? Are WE trusting HIM ALONE?