"FAITH ALONE, IN GOD ALONE"

Romans 4:9-25
HRM – 7-8-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***The blessedness Abraham had, can be yours! (v. 9)**

How? Through faith alone, in God alone!

I. Abraham was justified through <u>FAITH ALONE</u> (v. 10-16)

A. *Through faith alone,*
God's promises are <u>obtained</u> (v. 10-12)

B. *Through faith alone,*
God's promises are <u>guaranteed</u> (v. 13-16)

II. Abraham was justified through faith <u>IN GOD ALONE</u>! (V. 17-25)

A. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to <u>facing the impossible</u> (v. 17-18)

B. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to <u>gaining spiritual strength</u> (v. 19-20)

C. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to <u>glorifying God</u> (v. 20b-21)

D. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to <u>attaining salvation</u> (v. 22-25)

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INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: The children's hymn - "Father Abraham had many sons; many sons had father Abraham; and I am one of them, and so are you; so let's just praise the Lord . . ."

V. 9

Paul in verses 9 & 10 follows his pattern (cp. 3:1-5, 9, 31; 4:1) of asking questions and then answering them.

In verse 9 his question is: "Is the blessedness of having righteousness credited to your account (v. 6), sins forgiven (v. 7), and the record cleared (v. 8) limited to the Jew only (because he used Abraham and David as examples)? Or does this blessedness extend also to the Gentile (the non-Jew)?"

The theme of verses 9-25 involves the fact that God can credit righteousness to anyone's account (not limited to Abraham - v. 23).

Abraham is the spiritual father of everyone who believes. The all-inclusiveness of justification through faith is stressed.

Abraham is the father of "all them that believe" (v. 11); the father of those who walk in his steps of faith (v. 12); the promise of God is to "all the seed" (v. 16); Abraham is the "father" of us all (v. 16). Abraham is the father of many nations (v. 17 & 18).

What was written down about his justification (v. 22) was not limited to him (v. 23), "but for us also" (v. 24), since Jesus is our Lord also (v. 24) and his finished work was for our need (v. 25).

***The blessedness Abraham had, can be yours! (v. 9)**

How? Through faith alone, in God alone!

I. Abraham was justified through FAITH ALONE (v. 10-16)

A. *Through faith alone,*
God's promises are obtained (v. 10-12)

V. 10

The question is: "When was Abraham's record cleared with God?"

"Was it when he had the outward manifestation (circumcision) of his faith or before?"

ANSWER - Before

Abraham had his account credited with righteousness by God before he was ever circumcised.

It is stated that he "believed in the Lord" in Gen. 15:6.

He was circumcised in Gen. 17:24.

God originally gave His promise to Abraham when he was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4), and He confirmed it 10 years alter when Abraham was 85 (Gen. 15:6-18).

At age 85 Abraham's faith is recorded (15:6), but it was not until he was 99 that he was circumcised on the same day that God commanded him to be (17:23-24).

V. 11

Abraham's circumcision is called a "sign" and "seal."

1. "Sign" -

   a. a mark or indication that distinguished (the Jew from the Gentile)

   *b. a token to confirm a past, present, or future promise. A proof or evidence to remind someone of a promise made by God.
   Gen. 17:11 - "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."

"Sign" = God chose a sign which would be an everyday reminder to the Jew that he was in a covenant relationship with God (every time he went to the bathroom he was reminded of the covenant relationship).

2. "Seal" - that which authenticates, confirms, or shows something to be genuine.

   Circumcision was an external (visible) indication of the internal (Unseen) faith of Abraham.

   By obeying God in being circumcised, Abraham demonstrated his faith in God. He was circumcised because he was justified; he was not circumcised in order to be justified (contrary to the Judaizer's opinion in Paul's day - Acts 15:5; Gal. 2:3, 4; 5:1-12).

   Just as Abraham's seal came after his salvation, our fruits of obedience will follow our salvation.

Abraham received the title of "circumcision" (a substitute for "Jew") <u>after</u> he exercised faith in God's Word (NOTE: No one has the right to call themselves by the title "Christian" who has not first believed the Gospel).

Just like circumcision came <u>after</u> faith for Abraham, so <u>baptism</u> comes <u>after</u> faith for the Christian.

V. 11b

Abraham's faith makes him a <u>spiritual</u> father to all who believe (contrast with Rom. 4:1 where the physical fatherhood of Abraham is in view).

NOTE: Even though Abraham is our spiritual father, this does not make us spiritual Jews. Israel and the church are always distinct.

V. 12

"Walk" - a military term, meaning: to march in line or file. We are marching to the same music and marching orders of Abraham -- "FAITH"!

"Walk in the steps" - we are commanded to follow in Christ's steps (I Pet. 2:21) and walk in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).

While we must always be careful about being followers of men (I Cor. 3), we also are commanded to follow in the steps of those who follow Christ! (I Cor. 4:16; II Cor. 12:18; Phil. 3:16; I Th. 1:16; II Th. 3:7, 9; I Pet. 5:3).

I can say with Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ."
We all are examples to someone who is following.

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:12).

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." (Heb. 13:7).

B. *Through faith alone,*
God's promises are guaranteed (v. 13-16)

V. 13

"Heir of the world" = Abraham as being inheritor of the land of Canaan is specifically in view (Gen. 17:8); a promise that is still waiting ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom (Heb. 11:8-10).

The Law was not given until 430 years after God made this promise to Abraham (Gal. 3:17).

God's promise to Abraham was not conditioned by works. (EX: "I will give you a land if you . . .")

Our salvation today is not conditioned by works either! We are joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) by faith, not works. (Eph. 2:8, 9)

V. 14

If only Law keepers would inherit the promised kingdom:

1) Faith is "made void" - faith would be emptied of all meaning and be worthless

2) The promise would be made of "none effect" - rendered inoperative. No one would receive the promise if it were obtained by the Law, because no one has ever kept the Law! (v. 15)

   Gal. 3:18 - "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

V. 15

"The Law worketh wrath" - the only thing the Law brings about or produces is the anger of God, not a home in the kingdom! Why? Because no one has ever kept the Law (Rom. 3).

Those who are trusting the Law for salvation would actually be better off if there was no Law, because the Law only shows how bad a transgressor they are!

--The Law only condemns man; it does not save.

--The Law only justifies the wrath of God on an individual; it does not offer salvation.

No one is ever held responsible for violating a non-existent Law (one is never guilty of breaking a law if the law did not exist).

--However, if the Law exists, and you break it, you are then held responsible to pay for it.

Jesus said: "To whomsoever much is given much shall be required."

V. 16

God's promises are based upon His <u>grace</u>, not men's worthiness of them.

"Sure" = firm, stable

NOTE: The pattern of those who trust in God:

1) Faith --- 2) Grace --- 3) <u>Sure</u> of salvation

As compared to those who trust in themselves:

1) Works --- 2) Law --- 3) <u>Unsure</u> of salvation

--The victory that overcomes the world is our faith (I Jn. 5:4).

--Our faith is the foundation (the bottom line) of our Christian lives. Everything else in our growth is built onto our faith (II Pet. 1:5-7).

II. Abraham was justified through faith IN GOD ALONE! (V. 17-25)

A. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to facing the impossible (v. 17-18)

V. 17

Abraham is the spiritual father of us all--maybe not in man's eyes (i.e. the Jews' eyes), but in the sight of God ("before Him" - v. 17).

V. 17b

Two attributes of God are described:

1) God is omnipotent - all powerful. He is called the one who gives life to the dead.

2) God is omniscient - all knowing. He is one who can describe things that do not yet exist as if they did exist (EX: Cyrus, Messiah, end times).

V. 18

"Who against hope" = beyond hope

"Believed in hope" = upon hope

Abraham depended upon his confidence with all of his heart (He had faith in his faith because he knew his faith was in God!).

B. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to gaining spiritual strength (v. 19-20)

V. 19

Abraham did not become weakened in his confidence in God; that is, he (literally) "did not lose strength" in his faith even though he was 100 years old and Sarah's womb was decades beyond child-bearing years.

V. 20

"He staggered not" - He did not waver. He was not divided in his thinking.

Abraham did not vacillate in two directions between faith and unbelief.

NOTE: Abraham had some misconceptions in his faith, but not mistrust.

He at first was ignorant of <u>how</u> God would give him a son (EX: he wondered if Eliezer his servant was whom God intended to be the promised seed -Gen. 15:24).

After he found out that the seed would come from his own body (v. 4), he thought that Ishmael through Hagar was the promised seed (Gen. 16:17:18); but when he was told that the child would come from Sarah, though amazed (17:17), he believed.

"Was strong" = lit. infused with strength, or empowered with strength by faith.

C. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to <u>glorifying God</u> (v. 20b-21)

V. 21

That which gives glory to God (v. 20b) is our assurance in Him.

We bring God glory by being fully persuaded (or filled with complete assurance) that what God promises, He is able to perform.

To not believe God is to question His truthfulness, to doubt His faithfulness, and to call Him a liar.

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

D. *Faith in God alone is:*
The key to attaining salvation (v. 22-25)

V. 22

Faith honors God (v. 21), and God honors faith (v. 22).

V. 23, 24

The Bible is not a book that merely describes past events. It applies to everyone today!

Abraham's imputed righteousness by faith out to be an encouragement to us today, since we are justified the same way!

V. 25

Jesus was "delivered" (handed over by the Father) to be crucified because of our transgressions.

Is. 53:12 - "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Jesus died because of - the transgressions we committed (v. 25a),
and He was raised to life again because of - the justification we needed
(v. 25b).

We could not be justified had Christ not risen from the dead, since justification means being clothed with the righteousness of the living Christ. A dead Savior could not justify.