

Romans 4:1-25 By Faith Alone

How many of you have heard of or use the Cash App?

- A) Where you can transfer funds from your account into your friend's account via an app on your phone.
- B) Popular amongst Millennials and Gen X – don't like to carry money – go out one person buys the rest – cash app
- C) Pretty cool –

My kids will sometimes call my wife – never me. Need help – want to buy.... Short – help?

- A) Call me – put it back on the shelf – wait until pay day
- B) Denise is nicer than me – call her – She will cash app them –
 - 1) Then when they get paid – cash app her back
- C) Transferring funds from one account to another account that had insufficient funds

Well here in Romans 4 Paul shares how the Righteousness of God is transferred into our account – through the app called – FAITH

- A) Recall how Paul spent the first three chapters telling us how – insufficient our funds were
- B) Chapters 1-3 Paul built a case for how the entire world is guilty before God.
 - 1) Summed up in 3:23 All sinned fallen Glory of God
thus we were under the wrath of God!
- C) Guilty because man ignored the law of Creation
 - 1) Creation speaks of a Creator – ignored the creator – worshipped – Creation
- D) Guilty because man ignored the law of Conscience – the inner standard inside
- E) Guilty because man broken and rebelled against the law of God! – The ultimate standard.

But then in V.21 Paul brings a word of Hope – There is a righteousness of God apart from the law.

A) Righteousness that comes through having faith in Jesus Christ!

B) Now the question that would arise in the mind of most Jews – is what about Abraham –

C) Abe is called the father of the Faith –

1) Was he justified or declared righteous by Faith or by works?

D) That is the question that Paul answers here in Romans 4!

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found 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 accounted to him for righteousness.*”

E) Read again in the NLT

“Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? ² If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. ³ For the Scriptures tell us, “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” NLT

Paul's point here is that Abraham was justified by faith *before* he did any of the great works for which he is so famous.

A) When Paul says that “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”

B) He is referring to an event that took place in Genesis 15 – where God made a promise to Abraham –

1) Promise make him a great nation – his descendants would be like the stars in the heavens

C) Abraham said – OK sounds good – that is when God said “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”

D) The word accounted appears eleven times in Romans 4 and has the idea of crediting to one's account.

1) Other translations render it: *counted, reckoned, considered, imputed, credited*

E) These all mean that righteousness was credited to Abraham's account because of faith, not because of works!

SOLA FIDE – FAITH ALONE – latin – luther

Now in that culture – when two people made an agreement – they would prepare an elaborate sacrifice

A) Heifer, a goat, and a dove – all split down the middle – half of each body laid along side a path in the road

B) The two parties would meet in the middle – 50/50 partnership – let my fate be as these animals if I don't hold up my end of the bargain.

C) Well Abraham prepares the animals and waits for God to Show up to seal the deal.

1) But the Lord delayed his coming – Abe fell asleep

While Abe was sleeping Abe fell asleep – God showed up and sacrificed the animals sealing the deal.

A) That was God's way of saving – Abe this is not going to be a 50/50 partnership – where you do your part and I do my part

B) This is going to be different – Basically I am going to do it all and you simply need to believe in the promise of my word!

C) Principle that Paul is teaching is that Saving faith is really Trust transfer!

D) A person goes from trusting in his own good works to save him to trusting in the finished work of Jesus on the cross to save them.

V.4 ⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt

NLT - ⁴ When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned.

A) You went to work for a specific company and you agreed on a wage or a salary

B) Your employer is indebted to pay you for hrs worked – you earned your salary.

1) Your paycheck doesn't say gift on it – says wages

C) You earn your wages - But that is not how Salvation works

1) Salvation is the gift of God – not works lest anyone should boast

V.5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

D) Saved by faith apart from works!

1) Abraham hadn't done anything yet and God declared him to be righteous!

Now Abraham's faith had action but that is different from works!

A) Action accompanies faith – I can say that I have faith that this chair can hold me but my faith is proved by my action when I sit down

B) George Blondin – get in the wheel barrel !!!!!

C) Abraham's faith would be proved by his actions but – he was justified by faith alone apart from works!

1) Declared righteous before he did anything

Paul then moves from Abraham to David – Abraham was the father of faith and David was their greatest King.

A) But David had failed miserably – he broke 3 of the 10 commandments he coveted Bathsheba – committed Adultery – murder – cover up –

Aa) David thought that he got away with his sin

B) 9 months – no one knew – God told Nathan – Story – You are the Man!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

C) David wrote in Psalm 32 how his insides ached because of his secret sin –

1) he looked good on the outside – but dying inside because of his guilt

D) But when he finally comes clean - Receives forgiveness – Paul quotes from Psalm 32 here

⁶ just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,

And whose sins are covered;

⁸ *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”*

E) David was forgiven and his sin was not held against him – even though his behavior was horrible.

1) He confessed and God credited to him as righteousness

F) So Paul uses Abraham the father ... and David the greatest king to prove his point

The intense Jewishness of Paul's argument could lead some at this point to assume that *sola fide* was for Jews only.

A) Abraham was the grand patriarch. David was their blessed King

B) Is salvation by faith alone merely a Jewish privilege? Paul answers that question in V.9-12

⁹ Does this blessedness then *come* upon the **circumcised *only***, or upon the uncircumcised **also**? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

C) In Genesis 15 God credited Abraham with Righteousness because of his faith – that happened when he was uncircumcised

D) Abraham wasn't circumcised until chapter 17 – close to 14 years later

So God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised.

¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, ¹² and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.”

C) Circumcision was the special mark that the Jews took to signify that they belonged to God.

Read V.11-12 in the NLT – makes it very clear – ¹¹ Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised.

Circumcision was the outward sign of the inward reality – (the wedding ring or the wedding tattoo)

So Abraham is the **spiritual father** of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. ¹² And Abraham is also the **spiritual father** of those who have been circumcised, but **only if they** have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Now this is a huge point that Paul is making to his Jewish listeners:

A) Paul is saying the thing that really makes you a spiritual descendant of Abraham is your faith not your blood – WOW!!!!

B) Jews and Gentiles are the same – Justified by faith in the finished work of Jesus!

C) Abraham is the spiritual father of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised who put their faith in Jesus and in nothing else.

¹³ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

So what makes them an heir is not blood but their faith – God's promise to Abraham was not merely physically promise – Spiritual promise

A) Abram names means father of many –

B) When Abram had no kids – God appeared to him and said – I am going to change your name
1) Abram was like – Great idea God – this name is so embarrassing –

C) I meet people – what is your name Abram – father of many – awesome how many kids – None

God says – Yea I see that so I am going to change your name to Abraham – Father of many nations

A) Not only many kids but – awesome kids impact the world

B)But all along God was thinking beyond the Physical and to the spiritual side of things.

C)Physically – Abraham would become the father of the Jewish nation – but he would also in his flesh attempt to help God out – Hagar – Ishmael

1)From Ishmael came all the Arab nations – trace their lineage to Abraham through Ishmael

D)But God was thinking of something even bigger – every nation of the world there are spiritual descendants of Abraham –

1)those who like Abraham are Justified – declared righteous by faith – Faith in Jesus Christ

¹⁴ For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, ¹⁵ because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

¹⁴ If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. NLT

A)This is why it is so important that the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 15 was made 500 years prior to the law being given.

B)If the promise is only to those who obey the law – the promise is pointless –

C)In reality the law was given to reveal we are all lawbreakers

¹⁵ For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!) NLT

D)So If you live by law, you can't receive what's promised (because you are trusting in your wages rather than receiving the gift).

E)If the promise rests on any kind of law-keeping, it is "useless"—because no one keeps the law

(as Paul has already shown at length back in chapters 2 and 3). The law can only show us where we fall short,

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

NLT

¹⁶ So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. **For Abraham is the father of all who believe.**

The thing that connects us to Abe is Faith not blood not obedience to the law!

Abraham a case study in Faith

¹⁷ (as it is written, "*I have made you a father of many nations*") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "*So shall your descendants be.*" ¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

V.17-25 Show us 3 things about the Life of faith that we can learn from Abraham

#1 You don't focus on the outward appearances or how you feel.

A)"He faced the fact that **his body was as good as dead**"

100 yrs old – no kids – good as dead – Sarah the same .

B)The Writer of Hebrews – pulls no punches in describing Sarah –

1)**She was well passed the age of child bearing**

C)How do I look honey – well passed the years of Child bearing – well you are as good as dead.

D)V.18 Note that phrase contrary to Hope – Everything was contrary to this happening

1)He was too old – Sarah was too old

American Football – Easy to score a touchdown – carry the football – 100 yards – 300 feet – no problem right

A)Except there are these guys called the Defensive team that live to kill the guy with the ball – they are contrary to us –

B) Abraham had something contrary to him experiencing the Promise of God – Himself – his body

C) True of all of us – the thing that stands in the way of us living according to the promises of God is us

1) Our hang ups/ our baggage/ our past mistakes

Abraham didn't focus on himself – When he looked at himself it seemed hopeless – So He focused on God who was bigger than himself!

A) Faith is only as strong as the object of our faith

B) Doesn't matter how sincere faith is – if the object isn't strong – Story of man drove his Caddy Escalade onto Lake Michigan – Ice Shake – thin ice

C) Friend told him the ice was thick enough – he sincerely believed it – Sincerely wrong

1) Lost his Caddy

D) People sincerely believe in themselves – their wrongs – sincerely wrong – lost for all eternity!

#1 You don't focus on the outward appearances or how you feel.

What does Abraham's life teach us about Faith in God ? #2 You believe that God is capable of doing the impossible.

A) Abraham believed that God was able to give life to that which was dead.

B) This probably refers to how Abraham viewed his body – good as dead – on my last legs

C) But anything is possible with God.

However this same faith reappears in Genesis 22 – Isaac has been born – God says take him up to MT Moriah – sacrifice him

A) The Writer of Hebrews tells us that Abe was willing to do so because he believed that God would bring his son back to life

B) Abe believed in the promise of God – For Abe – it was as easy for God to raise the dead as it was to bring a dead womb to life.

C) So Abraham believed that God was able to do the impossible

The 3rd thing Abraham's life teaches us about a life of faith is this: **#3 Our faith doesn't have to be perfect.** –

He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.²² And therefore *“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*

Note the phrase: He did not waver

A) Wait you say: Sarah tell them you're my sister – TWICE that was a lack of faith.

B) Twice through his wife under the bus – what a great woman Sarah was.

C) What about – Sleep with Hagar idea? – That was a lack of faith that caused problems that still exist to this day.

What does Paul mean when He says – Abraham did not waver in faith. Two things

A) 1st – though his faith stumbled – he never abandoned God.

B) Room for doubt – there is room for stumbling – but we keep coming back to what we do know to be true.

C) See the object of faith is more important than the amount of faith

1) Abraham never let go of God!

Also reminds us of the way that God sees our failures on the other side of Calvary – Hebrews: He faithfully endured.....

A) Here he did not waver

B) Our failures are covered by Jesus

C) Faith needs to be growing

Airplane ride: Woman and the boy with the cowboy hat

A) Both arrived at the same time / same plane

B) One was a wreck the other enjoyed the ride.

C)The more our faith grows the more we enjoy the ride.

See Paul ends this by pointing to the number one thing that our faith is connected to and that is the Resurrection.

²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴ but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Our hope of Justification is based in this simple truth – Jesus beat death

A)Jesus rose – we have life

B)On the cross our sin was placed or imputed to Him – credited to his account

C)So that in his Resurrection – His life and righteousness could be credited to our account

How does faith grow?

**Read your Bible – Stories of the faithfulness of God
Same yesterday today and forever**

Experience – take steps of faith

The Faith of others – Jonathan Armor Bearer