

ROMANS CH.4

MAJOR THEME: THE GOSPEL: THE RIGHTEOUSNES OF GOD REVEALED IN JUSTIFICATION

Hymn: #50 Dear Lord and Father of Mankind #72 The King of Love My Shepherd Is

(Modified Outline of John A. Witmer- Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; SP Publications; 1983; p.438)

- 1) INTRODUCTION AND THEME (1:1-17)
 - A) Apostolic Greeting (1:1-7)
 - B) Apostolic Travel Plans (1:8-15)
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 - ii) Results (1:24-32)
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 - D) Against All Humanity (3:9-20)
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 - ii) All Conscious of Sin (3:19-20)
- 3) RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED IN JUSTIFICATION (3:21-5:21)
 - A) Provided Righteousness Explained (3:21-31)

B) Provided Righteousness Illustrated (Ch. 4) Paul has just convincingly established the universal condemnation of all humanity and how the only solution is the provided righteousness of God by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. He had said in Ch. 3 that the Law and the Prophets had testified to as much. Here in Ch.4 he anticipates his reader's tentativeness in accepting such a simple and elegant solution to such an overwhelming ugly problem of sin. So he adds to the Law and Prophets the proofs of the Patriarchs and Psalms by showing how both Abraham and David had shown and said that salvation was by grace through faith. In doing this Paul gives us the perfect illustration of the righteousness of God revealed in Justification "sola fide"; by faith alone.

i) By Faith Not Works (4:1-8)

- (1) V.2 The ancient rabbis had taught that Abraham had a surplus of merit that was available to his physical descendants which gave them an exalted position relative to everyone else.
 - (a) Paul seems to concede the point to the rabbis, but insists that Abraham could only boast before men and not God. He then points them back to the scriptures.
- (2) V.3 "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
 - (a) Quoted from Gen. 15:6 where God had promised Abram saying "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield and your very great reward."
 - (i) Abram, as a very old man already, lamented that he had no son, so how could this be. God then promised him a son coming from his own body.

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- (b) “Credited” λογίζομαι- occurs eleven times in this chapter translated as credited, credit, credits and counts (vv. 3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24). It means “to put to one’s account”.
- (3) V.4-5 The contrast is clear between wages earned as a result of working and a gift credited as a result of faith.
 - (a) Your salary from work is an employer’s obligation to you and has nothing at all to do with gifts being given to you. God does not pay wages, he gives gifts to those who by faith in His grace will receive them.
- (4) V.6-7 Abraham was saved by faith before the Law and David after the Law. Here Paul quotes David in Psalm 32:1-2 who “says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works”
 - (a) “Blessed (μακάριος- happy; enviable) are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.”
 - (i) This is salvation and the blessedness of all past sins and condemnation removed.
 - (b) “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count (λογίζομαι-credit) against him.”
 - (i) This is security and the blessedness of all present and future sins to never be credited to our account, for Jesus Christ has traded accounts with us. All our sins are credited to Him and all His righteousness is credited to us. HOW BLESSED CAN AND SHOULD WE BE?!?!

ii) By Faith Not Rites (4:9-12)

- (1) Paul has already dealt with the spiritual nature of circumcision back in Ch. 2 and how there is no difference in the deserved condemnation of both the “circumcised”- Jews and the “uncircumcised” Gentiles. Here, his point is one of “timing” and what circumcision really is, a “sign” and “seal”.
- (2) V.9-10 We don’t know exactly how old Abram was in Gen. 15:6 when his faith was credited to him as righteousness. But we do know it was before his misstep with Hagar who bore him Ishmael at which time he was 86 years old (Gen. 16:15). We also know that Abram was 99 years old when his name was changed to Abraham and he was given the covenant sign of circumcision (Gen.17:1; 26).
 - (a) Righteousness was credited to Abram at least 13 years (if not many more) **before** circumcision as a rite was given to him.
- (3) V.11 “sign” and “seal” of circumcision
 - (a) Sign- σημεῖον- a sign (typically miraculous), given especially to confirm, corroborate or authenticate; emphasizes the end-purpose which exalts the one giving it. Accordingly, it is used dozens of times in the NT for what authenticates the Lord and His eternal purpose, especially by doing what mere man cannot replicate or take credit for. (Copyright © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc.)
 - (i) Secondly, it means identification.
 - 1. The Jews were identified as a special chosen people through which God was working to bring in blessing to the whole world through Jesus Christ; the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16)
 - (b) Seal- σφραγίς – an etched (engraved) object pressed into soft wax or clay to seal a document (letter); (Copyright © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc.)
 - (i) Fundamentally it means security and ownership

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1. Eph. 1:13-14 “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a **seal**, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.
 2. Eph. 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were **sealed** for the day of redemption
- (c) Unlike Abraham, many Jews in the OT had placed their trust in circumcision, the sign, rather than the God who gave it. In the NT, many place their trust in the sacraments of baptism and/or communion; other place their trust in church attendance or in their own track record of service.
- (i) A “sacrament” or “sign” is always predicated by the objective possession of that which the sacrament or sign represents. There is no “magic” in them.

iii) By Faith Not Law (4:13-17)

- (1) Paul continues his “timing” argument by reminding his readers that Abraham received the promise of becoming “heir of the world” (Gen.12:1-3) by faith well before the Law.
 - (a) The Law was not given till several centuries later and those who live by it are NOT heirs of the promise made to Abraham.
 - (b) Those who let the Law do its job on them and turn to faith in God as Abraham did, they are heirs along with Abraham.
 - (c) V. 15 “Where there is no law, there is no transgression”
 - (i) This doesn’t mean that there was no “sinning” before the law, for transgression is just one form of sin (See notes Ch. 3; 3-A-ii)
- (2) V.16 Abraham is the father ALL who have the faith of Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile.
- (3) V. 17 Giving “life to the dead” here refers to Abraham’s old age and Sarah’s dead womb and “calls things that are not as though they are” refers to the promised child Isaac who would come from their very bodies.
 - (a) It also has a personal application to us in our seasons or circumstances of deadness or even our sin. If you, like Abraham have placed your faith in His promise of grace and provided righteousness through Jesus Christ, then he calls you and your circumstances “sons/daughters” and “life”.

iv) By Faith in God’s Promise (4: 18-25)

- (1) V. 18 Against All hope, Abraham in hope believed.
 - (a) Hope is a favourable and confident expectation for the future and the unseen.
 - (b) There was just NO possible way this could happen, yet that is exactly what Abraham was confidently expecting WOULD happen.
- (2) V. 19 He faced the fact that his body was as good as dead.
 - (a) We have to “face the fact” that we ARE dead and cannot save ourselves.
 - (b) In a lifesaving situation, it’s not until a near drowning victim stops struggling that the lifesaver can safely rescue him.
- (3) V.20 He didn’t waiver through unbelief
 - (a) He didn’t vacillate, going back and forth divided in his own thinking
 - (b) He didn’t “toy with doubt”; he doubted his doubts and didn’t give into them.
- (4) V. 21 He was fully persuaded that God was able to do what He had promised.

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- (a) He believed in God's power, His δυνατός- the root word from which we get "dynamite".
- (5) V. 22 "This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."
 - (a) These four aspects were why. Just think about the faith that this man had in God. It is truly staggering.
- (6) V. 23 The righteousness credited to Abraham by his faith is the exact same righteousness that will be credited to you and me as result of our faith in the resurrected Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as seen in our hope against hope that God is propitious even to the wicked; our facing the fact that we are dead and cannot save ourselves; our refusing to listen to doubt and lies from within and without; and our belief that God has the power to do the miraculous in redeeming, rapturing, resurrecting, establishing His Kingdom and re-creating a new heaven and a new earth.
- (7) V. 25 "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."
 - (a) The meaning of this passage is understood when word "for" is understood as "because of".
 - (i) In other words, "Because of our sins and condemnation, Jesus was crucified upon the cross. Because his death secured our justification, he was raised from the dead. His resurrection is the PROOF that our sins have been removed and that we are justified.
 - (ii) The resurrection is the vindication of the Son's perfect life and the demonstration of the Father's acceptance of His perfect sacrifice which secures redemption, propitiation and reconciliation for the world and justification for all who believe.
 1. We sinned therefore He suffered. We were justified therefore He rose again. Thank you God!