

The Footsteps of Faith Series
Lesson # 7 “Faith’s Connection to Grace”
Romans 4:1-25

Scripture: Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

Introduction:

I have a book in my office called “Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations” have you heard of it. Why would I have such a book in my office? Well sometimes I like to connect what we know in our world or what has been said in the past to a present situation for better understanding.

Famous speeches usually always quote some famous well respected person of the past to substantiate the speaker’s point of view. Probably a day doesn’t go by that Abraham Lincoln or Theodore Roosevelt are not used to make some political or philosophical point.

Transitional Statement:

Today the Apostle Paul will reach back in time and refer to some of the most respected people of God that ever walked the face of the planet, to make his point that righteousness comes by faith outside of works. If we listen closely we might hear Paul saying “don’t try to save yourselves...it can’t be done.”

Lesson:

I. What did Abraham find according to the flesh?

Romans 4:1-3

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 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 CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

- A. Paul goes back to Abraham, the patriarch of patriarchs, to make a point about faith ...
 - 1. Referred to as Father Abraham
 - 2. He was esteemed and respected by all
 - 3. By mentioning him the whole of the Jewish nation stops to listen

B. According to flesh, what has Abraham found?

1. Flesh is the Greek word Saurx and points to the meat on our bones and hence describes the external temporal body with the soul in mind.

- a. Wealth Gen. 13:2

- Livestock
- Silver
- Gold
- Servants

C. If Abraham was justified by works

1. The “if” here is not one of possibility

- a. Points to the impossible

2. If he was justified by works

- a. Then he has something to boast about

- Boasting holds up your own efforts
- He was a hard worker and seemingly successful in everything he touched.

3. But boasting is vain before God.

- a. Because works represent man’s own efforts and don’t impress God in the slightest.

- b. Solomon found his own efforts to be useless in the whole scope of things.

D. Well, Abraham’s justification before God was because of his trust in Him.

1. And that belief in God was credited to him as righteousness

- a. Specifically this quotes Gen 15:6 Believed that God could give him a child at age 100 with Sarah being 90

2. This wasn’t just an isolated occasion but a way of life for Abraham

- a. Also think about Gen12:1-4 @ 75 years old believing God, left his home

- b. And Gen. 22 offered his son Isaac.

3. God isn’t interested in mans ability to accomplish work

- a. But God was interested in his willingness to trust in Him.

4. And trust in God didn't yield boasting ...but humility.

II. The result of work

Romans 4:4-5

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

A. The result of work

1. You go to work and punch the time clock and accomplish tasks
2. Your paycheck is simply what is owed for services rendered.
3. You spend it and it is gone.

B. But the result of faith is different

1. Faith relies on God to provide.
2. It completely moves us away from our own efforts
3. And it is the avenue of righteousness.
4. And it lasts for eternity

III. Blessings come apart from works.

Romans 4:6-8

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

- A. You would think that Abraham would be a compelling enough example of justification by faith...but now King David is brought out.
- B. The blessing that David refers to in Psalms 32:1-2 is the complete forgiveness of sin.
 1. This Psalm directly points to the dispensation of Christ.
 2. And it is not connected with works
 3. The blessing of forgiveness is comes from faith in the crimson flow of Jesus' blood offered on our behalf.

IV. Not only that, the credit of righteousness came before the law.

Romans 4:9-12

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

- A. So Paul raises the question about this blessing of forgiveness. He asks was it just for those circumcised or the un-circumcised also?
- B. To which he points slams the answer home saying that Abraham was credited with righteousness before he was circumcised and therefore outside the Law of Moses.
 - 1. This was really hard for most Jews to swallow.
- C. He goes on to explain that Abraham had received circumcision as a sign of his faith and a seal of righteousness
 - 1. Circumcision wasn't a bus ticket to heaven.
- D. So the implied answer to this question is that forgiveness of sin was to be made available for every man woman and child of this earth who trusted in God, not just to those circumcised under the law of Moses.
- E. So that Abraham could thus be the father of all, of both the circumcised and the un-circumcised who would follow Abraham in his footsteps of faith.

V. The Abrahamic promise comes through the righteousness of faith

Romans 4:13-15

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

- A. God had promised Abraham that all the world would be blessed through him Gen 12:3
 - 1. And we understand that promise refers salvation under Christ Gal 3:29
 - 2. But the promise didn't come through the Law of Moses
 - a. Promises are useless under a legal system
 - b. Under a legal system contracts and witnesses are needed.

3. But under faithpromises stand as a trust.

VI. And the Promises come through faith in order to be connected with grace to be made available to all.

Romans 4:16-25

16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, 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, 17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. 18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." 19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

A. The blessing of Christ comes by faith so it is connected with grace

1. Therefore it is a gift not connected in any way with mans efforts or abilities .
2. And since it is not earned it will be available to all descendants of Abraham...i.e. those who place there trust in God.
 - a. God is not partial, caring only for one man or group of men. Rom 2:11
 - b. But he wants all men to repent and come to Him. 2 Peter 3:9

B. Abraham believed God when it seemed all but impossible in his mind.

1. Without becoming weak in faith
2. Without wavering
3. Growing stronger each day even before he saw any results.
 - a. Fully assured that God was able
 - b. And that God was good for His word

22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

C. This credit of righteousness given to Abraham was for our sake also

1. In that we would understand the need to trust God and gift offered he offered at the alter in our place.

Conclusion:

Brethren the footsteps of faith has lead us to the doorstep of Calvary and only our humble trust in God will bring us on home. Many Christians spend a lot of time trying to build self images to insure their entrance to heaven. God tells us to do just the opposite, confessing our sins one to another...owning up to our weaknesses ...because when we are weak He is strong.

Here is a quotable quote for you today

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

Jesus the Christ

Matt 11:28