

## Studies in Romans

### Abraham – the Father of All who Believe! (4:6-12)

#### Context

- **1:1-17 Introduction**
- **1:18-4:25 The problem and God’s solution**
  - **3:21-4:25 God’s solution: justification by faith**
    - 3:21-26 God has revealed a way by which he justly makes people righteous through Jesus’ death if they have faith in Him
    - 3:27-4:25 Faith is what God has always wanted – it is the only means by which a person may inherit God’s promises
- **5:1-8:39 What it means to be justified by faith**

So far, Paul has expounded the problem of God’s wrath against mankind’s rebellion and he has established that there are no exceptions – everybody is facing God’s righteous condemnation. The turning point where Paul moves from the mankind’s problem to God’s gracious solution is in 3:21. This section takes us back to Paul’s “manifesto” in **1:16-17** and it’s where Paul begins to unpack it.

*“How can God righteously save anyone?”*

*Why such a massive emphasis on faith?*

Keeping in mind the Paul’s purposes for writing Romans...

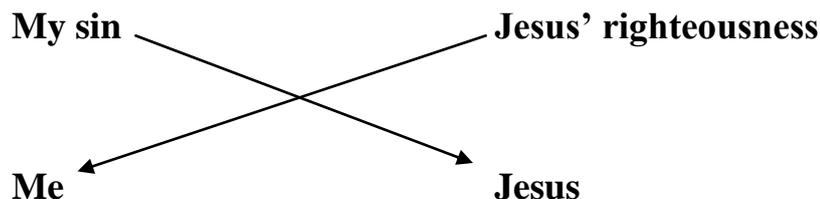
Justification by faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone—

**Example 1: Abraham (vv. 1-5)**

#### Example 2: David (vv. 6-8)

See **Psalm 32**. *What is the context surrounding this psalm? Why is that significant? What does this teach us personally?*

So David writes: *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”* **Romans 4:7-8 (ESV)** And because the believer’s sin is not counted against him, God is able to “count righteousness” to him “apart from works” (**v. 6**) There is a great exchange.



This is called the doctrine of “imputed righteousness” – because of the cross, God counts or credits (imputes) the righteousness of Jesus to the believer, because the sin of the believer was counted (imputed) to Jesus on the cross. Note these other verses: **1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Phil. 3:8, 9.**

1. **David is able to stand before God despite his sin.**
2. **David's standing before God is a matter of faith.**
3. **David is enjoying the experience of being forgiven.**

*How is it that Paul can quote a psalm speaking of forgiveness, when really, his main thought here is about justification? How does forgiveness relate to justification? See also **1 John 1:9—2:2**.*

Enjoying forgiveness:

- **Being forgiven brings peace of conscience.**
- **There is assurance of forgiveness for us.**
- **There is forgiveness despite great sins.**

## **But wasn't Abraham circumcised?**

Note how Paul again starts off with a question. This one is kind of like the question in **3:29**.

*Explain Paul's question in v. 9 in your own words. Can you think of any modern applications?*

*How does Paul answer this question?*

See **Genesis 15:6** and **Gen. 17** and also **Galatians 3:2**.

Regarding baptism, see **Colossians 2:9-12** for the similarities and differences between circumcision and baptism...

Let's conclude by focusing on **vv. 11b & 12**. God's purpose was that Abraham might be the father of all believers. *What's this tell us?*

1. **There is really only one people of God.**
2. **Ethnicity is not the most important thing.**
3. **Abraham is a spiritual model for every believer.**

**Unanswered questions:**

- If I'm justified by faith, may I just keep sinning?
- Is there now nothing unique about the Jews?

## **For further discussion**

(Perhaps choose one or more to think about further or to discuss in a group)

- *Thinking back to Paul's main purposes for writing this letter to the Romans, how does this passage accomplish those purposes?*
- *How does this section of Romans humble you? How does it encourage you?*
- *Re-read **4:7-8**, which comes from **Psalms 32:1-2**. What is your own sense of blessing as you read those words?*