

Respect and Esteem

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 November 2025

Preacher: Pastor Todd James

[0:00] No? You have? What do you think it is? See, that's exactly what I thought too. I thought it was dirt. Distance is equal to rate times time, but it's not dirt. It's, what? It does look like Texas, but Texas with a stovepipe, right?

A lot of hot air down in Texas, I tell you what. This is representative of Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Yeah, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, 1836 to 1846.

What it is, is it was founded in 1891 and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas is the oldest patriotic women's organization in Texas and one of the oldest in the nation.

You don't seem overwhelmed. Their motto is Texas, one and indivisible. Okay. And their mission is to perpetuate the memory and spirit of those who achieved and maintained the independence of Texas.

Wow. You guys are overwhelmed. These, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, they're responsible for saving the Alamo.

[1:32] Not the Battle of the Alamo. Okay. They, you know, but after the Battle of the Alamo had happened and years had gone and it was getting, falling into disrepair. They're daughters of the Republic of the Alamo. They're responsible for saving the Alamo. They've done that with various things throughout Texas.

But, but, but, if you want to be part of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, guess what you have to be?

Move down. Move down. They're both wrong. What? Who said a woman? Well, that, yeah, that's a good starting point.

Okay. You got to be, you got to be female in persuasion, but you also have to be able to prove that you're a descendant from one of the pioneers during a certain timeframe.

You have to be able to say, look, this is me, and, and show your lineage going back to people who were involved in the Republic of Texas during a certain set of time.

[2:50] If you don't fit into that category, if you are not a female persuasion, and if you weren't related to someone who was part of the, the Republic of Texas at this certain timeframe, you can't join.

You're not good enough. I don't care how much money you got. I don't care what you can't be part of them. And they take a bit of pride in that. We are the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

And that's great. That's fine. That's wonderful. Whatever. I don't live in Texas and I really don't care. But the idea that you have to be of a certain genealogical lineage to fit in is important.

Because we're going to take a look at that again today. If you've got your Bibles, I want you to turn to Romans. Romans chapter 4. And as you're turning to Romans chapter 4, the main thought that we have today is that the gift of righteousness is available to all.

You don't have to prove your lineage back to a certain group of people at a certain time in history to be able to receive and participate in the gift of God's righteousness.

[4:12] It's open to everybody. Okay? So, having said that, and I've now got the hiccups, let's turn to Romans chapter 4.

And we're going to take a look at the first 12 verses. What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather, according to the flesh?

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due. And to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. Where am I? I lost myself. Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered.

[5:20] Blessed is the man whom the Lord will not count his sin. Is this blessing then only for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised?

Oh. We'll try verse 9 again. All together. Here we go. Is this blessing then only for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised?

For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised, but also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Okay. We're going to take a look at that and break it down a little bit today. Now, if you'll remember, this was written by, who was it?

[6:44] Who wrote this? Paul. Okay. We're on the same book then. Okay. And Paul, what was his heritage? He was a Jew.

Okay. And he was writing to the church in Rome that was having a bit of a tiff between the Gentile Christians and the Jewish Christians over what it means to be righteous and how one becomes righteous.

And the first three chapters, he's gone on to point out how it doesn't matter if you're a Jew, how there's no advantage of being a Jew other than you've got the heritage of the scriptures, how what really matters is your personal relationship with God.

And it's kind of like Paul is just demolishing all their arguments. And you have to remember this. Paul is probably reciting all of the arguments that he had when Jesus was teaching him about the gospel.

Remember, Paul was a Jew and he was so devout in his faith that he was persecuting the church even to the point of death. And he was so sold out. He was more zealous than any of his contemporaries.

[7:58] He was the man at the very point of the spear attacking the heresy of believers in Jesus. And then on the road to Damascus, God said, hey.

And so Paul had to deal with this. And I'm wondering how much of the first three chapters of Romans are the arguments that Paul said, hey, God, but I'm a Jew. I'm supposed to, I'm special. And God said, hey, man, I can make Jews out of rocks. But I know the law. And he says, yeah, but the law is nothing. What matters is righteousness.

And you're a sinner. And all people are sinners. And I just wonder how much of this argument has been going on. And so Paul is able to write this letter to the church in Rome and explain it to them. And at this point in time, they come to this where they're pulling their hair out. Because all of their arguments, I'm descended from Abraham. I have the law. I was raised in the synagogue.

[8:56] All of this. And Paul just keeps saying, no, no, no. And they're done. They're all freaked out. And they're ready to cry. And they pull out their last. What?

What? Look at verse 1. What then shall we say was gained by Abraham? Well, what about Father Abraham? Now, if you.

I spent some time on this this week. And I was looking at this. What was gained word? And what it really means is not. It can be translated gained.

But that's not the best translation. The best one is discovered. What have we discovered about Abraham? Okay. Now, we know who Abraham is.

You guys. Let's play a little game here. Abraham was born where? Ur. Yeah. I was hoping somebody would say um. And I'd say you're one letter off. He was born in Ur of Chaldees.

[9:56] And God called him. And he said, come over here. And so they went all the way up around and down into Palestine. And he was married to his

half-sister, right?

And it was okay back then because it wasn't part of the law. And there was still enough. Whatever. We'll get into that later, I guess. But do you remember that a couple of times he lied about his sister, his half-sister?

And when he got scared, he'd lie about it? You know, Abraham, this great man of faith, this man of God, this man of devout. He got scared and lied about it.

What have we discovered about Abraham? Well, to be honest, what we've discovered is that just like anybody else, he was a sinner in need of a Savior.

But he was righteous. He wasn't righteous because of what he did. He was righteous because of what he believed. In fact, Paul then goes on.

[10:58] Look, even if he earned righteousness by works before God, it's nothing. Look at what it says. For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about.

Could you imagine walking down the street and running into somebody that had never, ever sinned? No. But imagine, there was somebody that had walked down the street and they'd never done anything wrong.

They'd never told a lie. They'd never stolen. They'd always obeyed their parents. They never sped. I can't believe that's true of anybody in here that has a driver's license. Anybody in here who's never sped and actually driven? Yeah, whatever. I don't believe you.

You guys know that the pedal goes down. The fast pedal. The loud pedal. This person never did any sin. Imagine that person. They'd be kind of...

[11:59] They'd have something to say, wouldn't they? Yeah, no, I've never done anything wrong. I've never been caught doing anything wrong because I've never done anything wrong. Can you imagine them walking up in front of God?

How arrogant would you have? There's no arrogance there. Look, you can be absolutely perfect and stand before God and still be nothing. Because not only is God perfect, He's also the creator. He's also the sustainer. In all, He's God. You can be perfect and you're still, yeah, I made you, so what?

You get the point? Even if He had earned His righteousness by doing everything perfect before God, nothing. And as we discovered, was He perfect?

No. And Paul ends this section by saying, remember, it is not works, but it is faith in the justifier that is counted as righteousness.

[13:04] What have we discovered from Abraham? And remember, he's talking to the Jewish believers in Rome. And, I mean, they were children of Abraham. And it was faith that counted as righteousness.

And so then he goes and he shifts gears totally. I mean, Abraham is one of the great figures in the history of the nation of Israel. Name a couple other great figures in the nation of Israel.

Who fought the battle of Jericho? Joshua. Joshua fought the battle of Jericho. Naming somebody else. Who was the wisest man ever? I don't believe it, he had too many wives.

Solomon. But who was the greatest king? David. Under David, the nation had peace.

They had peace through the sword. Because you didn't mess with David. Because he would kill you. And all your friends. They had peace in their faith.

[14:07] Because he was a man who pursued God. They had peace. It was just, they had peace. They had strength. They had the greatest prosperity.

You know, there was only two kings of the combined twelve tribes. Saul, the first one, didn't work out too well. And David, who was the standard by which all the rest of them are measured.

So if you're talking about great people in the history of the nation of Israel, David would be one of them. And so having just exposed Abraham as being someone who says it's by faith, he now turns to David and he says this.

Just as David also speaks of the blessing of one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works. David started out as a shepherd.

For a while there he was a rebel. You remember when King Saul was chasing him around trying to kill him? That would be his rebel years. He was king. He was a poet.

[15:11] He was a warrior. And he was a sinner. We all know the story. It was the time of war. David's armies are out fighting. But David stayed home. He saw one of his best friend's wife. Invited her up to the palace. Broke their marriage covenant. And was worried about getting caught. So he had her husband murdered. If I was to look it up in the dictionary, I think that counts as a sinner. Amen? This great man of God. This man who established the extent and the greatness of the kingdom. This man who was just wonderful. A sinner. There were three kings.

[16:14] I forgot about Solomon. Saul, David, and Solomon. But anyways. Sorry about that. David. David. What does he say? Blessed are the forgiven.

If you want to, put a marker here in Romans chapter 4. And then I want you to turn over to Psalms chapter 35. There's two particular Psalms written by David that are appropriate here. Psalm 35 is a general Psalm. It's written not about a specific incident, but it's just something that David wrote. And it says this. Contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me. Fight against those who fight against me. Is this? This is not. Am I in 35? Should I be in 32? I should be in 32. 35 is a different Psalm. Sorry about that. A little bloodthirsty from what I was. Psalm 32. Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.

[17:27] That's much better. That sounds like the sermon I wanted to preach. We'll go with that one. Okay? Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groanings all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me.

My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found. Surely in the rush of great waters they shall not reach him.

You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. This is a Psalm of reality.

[18:35] When I sinned against God, my heart was heavy and broken. How many of you can identify with that?

But when I turn to you for forgiveness, you forgave. You surrounded me with shouts of deliverance. This is a Psalm that is meant to be read, to be praised, to be recited.

It's just a thing of beauty. Blessed are the forgiven. If you turn to Psalm 51, we see a Psalm that David wrote specifically dealing with the sin with Bathsheba.

You've got to understand, King David, he'd done wrong, and he'd gotten away with it. So he thought, until the prophet Nathan, under inspiration from God, told him that little story about the guy who had a bunch of sheep and one sheep.

And David said, bring that man to me off with his head. And Nathan said, you are that man. You stole your buddy's wife. And David instantly broke down and went to the throne, went to the temple to pray.

[19:54] Went before the altar of God and humbled himself and begged forgiveness. And that's what Psalm 51 is about. And it's a great story of forgiveness.

Of humbling himself, accepting that he was a sinner. And throwing himself on the mercy of God. By the way, what should have happened to David, according to the Mosaic Law? For adultery? Death. For sleeping with his neighbor's wife? Death. For murder? Death. David should have died. But God forgave him.

Restored him. Watched over him. And so David writes, Blessed are the forgiven against whom God will not count sin.

Look, people. This is what forgiveness is. When we come before God. When, when, I mean, we're guilty, guilty, guilty.

[21:00] I mean, there's no question. It's not, it's not like, hmm, I wonder who did it. No, God knows. David had hidden his sin. Nobody knew about it. So God told Nathan, hey, Nathan, go deal with David.

Because God knows everything. He knows our deepest thoughts, our innermost secrets. He knows our guilt. But if we humble ourselves and come to him and ask for forgiveness, he will not count our sin against us.

He will forgive us. Yeah, we did it, but he's taken it and separated it from us. We will be forgiven. When we go before the judge, there's nothing to be held accountable for because God has forgiven that and separated it from us.

And David, the man after God's own heart, said, Blessed are the forgiven. Blessed are those whom God will not account according to their sin. And that's what it is all about.

And so as we turn back to Romans chapter 4, and Paul is talking to the church about what does it mean to be righteous? As Paul is teaching them, what does it mean to stand right before God?

[22:15] And he is thoroughly established. It is not because of your lineage. Yeah, okay, it's great. So you're a child of Abraham. Okay, wonderful. I mean, yay, you.

You did a good job picking your parents. No, it's whether or not you humble yourself before God. Look what he says.

Look what he says. Verse 4. Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due.

And to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

His faith is counted as righteousness. Oh, bummer.

[23:14] So who has access to this grace? You know, the only way you can become a daughter of the Republic of Texas is for you to have been born in a specific category of humanity.

Very small. For you to have been a physical descendant of Abraham, you had to have been born again in a very small category of people.

But for you to be right with God, it can be anybody. It can be anybody.

Look, we are all guilty. Romans 3.23. We've all sinned. But God justifies us when we turn to him in faith.

It's open to all sinners, which includes most of us. Amen? Yeah! Yeah! Look at verse 9.

[24:22] Is this blessing then only for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised? This is the heart of the matter. Is it, is the blessing of God that he said, you know, in Genesis chapter 12, I will bless you and bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you, and in you all of the world shall be blessed.

That was the promise to Abraham. Was that blessing only to be applied to his descendants? No. All the world shall receive that blessing.

How then was it counted to him? This blessing that he was promised. Was it counted because of his circumcision? No. Circumcision came years, decades later.

He was counted righteous before that. He was counted righteous because of faith. Therefore, he's the father not only of the circumcision, but also of the circumcision. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe.

And what does it mean to be the father of all who believe? It means that he was to be the example. He was to show the way. He was to be the leader. We are to look to Abram, and we are to gain understanding.

[25:37] You want to know what we've learned about Abraham? You want to know what we've discovered about Abraham? Abraham. That even though he was a sinner, God forgave him and called him righteous.

And that is a truth that is open to you and I as well. Even though we are sinners, God is willing to forgive us.

What is required for this? Well, you need to stand on one leg and hop while singing how great Texas is. No, that's not it.

You need to make certain you're in church. Every Sunday, you pay 25% tithe, and you always laugh at the pastor's jokes. That ain't it.

Recognize your need. Be honest. You carry a burden of guilt. Accept that Jesus is who He said He is.

[26:52] That He did what He said He did. And that He's coming back to do what He promised to do. And ask.

You see, when we realize that we're sinners, when we take a look at the Word of God and we realize, whoa, well, I've only broken nine of the Ten Commandments.

when we realize that we carry guilt and we realize that God is holy and just and He stands ready to judge all of humanity. And we don't know when that day comes.

We realize that Jesus Christ lived in eternity in glory, left glory, took upon Himself the form of a baby, and was raised, lived, a perfect, sinless life so that He could die on a cross to pay the penalty for sin which He never committed.

when we turn to Him in faith, He forgives us. That gift and that opportunity is open to all. Come talk to me.

[28:02] I'd love to walk you through that process. And for those of us that have asked Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior, two things for you. Blessed art thou.

You are blessed, blessed, blessed. I know sometimes life is tough. Can I get an amen? I know it's hard. I know sometimes it's a challenge. But boy, have you been blessed by God.

Let us seek to live in a way that honors Him, that respects that blessing, that honors that gift.

Amen? Let's pray. Father, Father, You are too good to us.

You are...