

Blessings of The Father

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: 17 July 2022

Preacher: Henry Dyck

[0 : 00] Good morning. I'd like to welcome everyone here.

And thank you for the special number and the children's story as well. The story ties in nicely with Romans as we're going through Romans.

Through Romans and kind of towards the beginning of the church age that we are in now and where discipleship is beginning to take place. They are training up leaders and training up people to go out and to spread the gospel.

So that fits in very well. So last night I received a picture of the stage here. And we're getting ready for VBS here. And it's since been a little bit rearranged.

There was a new pastor standing in the pulpit here. And so I thought maybe I was lucky I didn't need to come up today. But he's moved on to the building next door here.

[1 : 11] So we'll go forward. So we're continuing in Romans again this morning. Starting into chapter 4.

I figured I'd give a little bit of a recap up to this point here. So in chapter 1, Paul had made his stand on the gospel of Christ.

So essentially he was saying, The gospel that I'm bringing to you, it's salvation to everyone who believes. And he goes through Romans and he expounds on it.

He clarifies his position, his stand. And so he explains how the gospel reveals the righteousness of God. And brings out as well that we're justified by faith.

Not of works, but of faith. And so he lays out as well how God unleashes his wrath on the unrighteous. And how he gives them over to a debased mind.

[2 : 12] He doesn't lash out in fury, but instead he gives the unrighteous over to their wicked ways. And that is what God's wrath looks like.

And then going into chapter 2, there's the warning to the self-righteous. And he establishes that God is a righteous judge. And explains as well, the Jews, they're just as guilty as the Gentile nations.

They're as unrighteous as the Gentiles. And in chapter 3, he brings out that all have sinned. Jews, all have sinned.

No one is righteous. And therefore, there's no room for boasting either. So throughout all of Romans so far, up to chapter 4, we've been able to notice a bit that Paul's kind of pointing his finger at the Jews a little bit.

He's speaking to them quite a bit. And there's the examples of circumcision and talking about self-righteousness.

[3 : 19] The first thing that comes to my mind is he's going after the Pharisees. He's explaining things to them a little bit. And yet, as we've been going through the book of Romans, teaching through it, we see that it doesn't only apply to the Jews, it applies to us as well.

So, as we go into chapter 4 here, we see this theme continuing where he's, on top, looks like he's talking to the Jews.

But when we dig in, we'll see that it's talking to us just as well. So, we'll see an example of a man who was justified by faith and the blessings that come out of that faithfulness.

And as well, we'll take a look at some obstacles that can keep these blessings from coming to us. I've titled today's message, Blessings of the Father.

So, look at the first five verses here in Romans 4. We have the example of Abraham. He's been, Paul has been preaching justification by faith.

[4 : 44] And he gives us an example here now. And it comes from the Old Testament of all places. So, speaking to the Jews a little bit and to bring about an example from the Old Testament, it'll have definitely caught their attention.

And it should ours as well as we dig into this. Let's reread the first five verses here. What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

For if Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Now, the wages are not counted as grace, but as debt. But to him who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

So, we can see a good example to stir up the Jews. And he knows, Paul knows that there's going to be resistance to this new teaching that he's bringing to them, as they think it's new, this justification by faith.

[6 : 04] But is it a new teaching? Or are they simply blinded? So, I think, what better example could Paul bring up than Father Abraham, the Jewish forefather?

Must have been a bit of a shocker to the Jews. Abraham, really? He was a great man. God had made a covenant with him.

He made a promise, and later on, he made the covenant with him. And so, truly, Abraham had done something to earn such high favor with God.

I believe that's kind of the mindset here, and that's why this is being, this is recorded here. This is being taught. But, verse 2 of our text, it tells us that if Abraham had earned his righteousness, he would have had something to boast in.

And that boasting, it takes us right back to self-righteousness. Back in chapter 2, we heard the warning to the self-righteous.

[7 : 17] So, Abraham, though, at the end of verse 2, but not before God. Abraham had nothing to boast about before God.

For what does Scripture say? It continues in verse 3. Does it say, Abraham's work is odd, and it was accounted to him for righteousness?

No, it doesn't. It says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. This verse can be found, these words in this verse can be found back in Genesis 15, 6 as well.

Or it states that Abraham's belief is what was accounted to him for righteousness, his belief in God. Verse 3 here, it's the key here to this whole passage.

This thought of Abraham believing God, and it being accounted to him as righteousness. It is key. Abraham believed God's promise to him, and this belief, this faith in God, to keep his word, that is what was counted to Abraham for righteousness.

[8 : 40] So, being justified by faith, it's not really a new concept. It's been there since Old Testament times. It's not a new teaching at all.

This example of Abraham, how does that apply to us? Let's read a portion in Galatians chapter 3. Galatians 3, 26 through 29.

Galatians 3, 26 through 29. Galatians 3, 26 through 29. It reads, For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female.

For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. For us having faith in Christ Jesus, it makes us sons and daughters of God.

[9 : 55] And if we're Jews or Gentiles, none of that makes any difference. We are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

We're all part of the same family in Christ. And as verse 29 brought out there, And if we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

So that promise from God to Abraham, it was, going back to Genesis 12, And you all families of the earth shall be blessed.

It's speaking there of Christ's coming. And so in Galatians here, Christ, we have faith in Christ Jesus. We are heirs of this promise as well.

So, believing God justified Abraham. And for us today, nothing has changed.

[10 : 55] If we believe, we will be justified as well. If we believe God when he said of Jesus, This is my son in whom I am well pleased. If we believe that he is God's son, And we accept the salvation offered to us through Christ Jesus, We too are justified by faith.

Abraham and many before Abraham, As well as after him, Up until the coming of Christ, They believed God's promise, And they looked forward to the day that promise would be fulfilled.

And it was accounted to them for righteousness. So that belief there in the Old Testament, It's justification by faith. And for us today as well, Christ having already come, We look back to the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, And yet at the same time, We look forward with a lively hope To the Lord's return someday soon, And our faith for righteousness as well.

There too, justification by faith. So throughout Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, It is truly justification by faith.

So we know that we're justified by faith. And through the example of Abraham, We can see that it's no new teaching, But it's the same of old. So what then does this righteousness do for us?

[12 : 32] We are blessed by it. And if we look at the promise recorded in Genesis 12, We see that it is filled with blessings, If Abraham only believed. Let's turn to Genesis 12.

Let's read that promise. It's Genesis 12, First three verses. Genesis 12, One to three.

Now the Lord had said to Abraham, Get out of your country, From your family, And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you, And make your name great, And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you, And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So a lot of blessing there.

Let's turn back to our text in Romans 4. Start reading in verse 6. Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man To whom God imputes righteousness apart from works, Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered.

[13 : 55] Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin. Those are looking at verses 7 and 8.

Those are two loaded verses. I think just studying into them a bit. I think we could pull a full message out of those two verses alone. There's a lot there.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered.
Picture it this way. Speaking of lawless deeds, So concerning the law, Let's look at it this way.

The law is a straight, narrow line. And to keep the law, He'll walk this line perfectly all the days of His life. And not stray from it once.

If you stray, You've gone astray from the law. Sounds hard to do. Remember a story of an impaired driver Who was asked to walk a line.

[15 : 06] A police officer notices this vehicle Having trouble driving a straight line. And so he stops him And asks the driver to step out of his vehicle And come to the shoulder of the road.

You have that nice straight line there. And he puts the man on that line And goes out to ways in front of him And asks him to walk that line. To do a sobriety test.

And needless to say, The man had trouble staying on that line. So, just as this man, We too are asked to walk a straight line.

We often refer to it as the straight and narrow. And if we stray off of the straight and narrow Even a little bit, It is sin. How are we doing in our walk?

Are we walking that straight line each day? Or do we in a moment of weakness? At times, do we give in to fleshly desires? And do we just stray off that line just a little bit?

[16 : 18] We do, don't we? And yet, as 1 John 1.9 tells us, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, He restores that righteousness. It's impossible for us to walk that line, That straight line 100% of the time.

We are still in our fleshly bodies. We will stray from time to time. But when we confess our sins, The times that we do go astray, God is faithful to forgive us.

And what's more, He covers our sin. The shed blood of Jesus Christ Covers our confessed sins That it may not reappear to our shame.

Another example. Remember when Adam and Eve first sinned? What was the first symptom of... They were ashamed of their nakedness, right? And so they took up fig leaves In an attempt to cover their shame.

[17 : 27] And God had to shed an animal's blood To provide skins to cover them. So this is direct symbolism Of how Jesus would come And allow His blood to be shed To provide a covering for us And to reconcile us back to God.

Truly the believing, Forgiven child of God is blessed. Blessed is the man to whom The Lord shall not impute sin.

I like Brayden's version. It said, Shall not... Sin is not credited To him.

So, What does... In my text, It says impute. So what does impute mean? It means to put down Or charge to a person's account. So it's saying, Blessed is the man Whose sin the Lord Will not charge to his account.

It's kind of Rephrasing that a bit To clarify that. We all know how credit cards work, right? They're a handy little piece of plastic In our wallet.

[18 : 55] We don't have the cash on hand To purchase something, But this card then allows us To still take that thing home. But come the end of the month, What happens then?

We get that bill in the mail, right? There's debt owing. It's time to pay up. In that same manner, We have an account with God.

The difference, though, Is that on Judgment Day, When our accounts are opened, Lost my place here.

So when our accounts will be opened On Judgment Day, Our key verse here, Verse 3, It comes in, Those who have believed God, As Abraham did, Who have been justified by faith, And credited with righteousness, Those accounts will come up debt-free.

They will be paid in full By the crucified Christ. We all deserve to be charged With the debt of our sins, And judged according to the law.

[20 : 13] We deserve the just punishment For our transgressions. And yet it pleased God To be merciful to us, And to send His Son to die for us, To lay all our transgressions On His Son, To have Him become sin for us, And to nail Him, Along with all our sins, To the cross.

And because of His mercy, As far as the east is from the west, So far He has removed Our transgressions from us. Psalms 103.12 Our debt has been paid.

Truly the one Counts as righteous. He is blessed. To be set apart from And to be removed from our debt, The debt of our sin, Is a great blessing indeed.

May we always remain faithful To the one who paid our debt, Who cleared the way For us to receive such blessings. What then keeps so many From receiving these blessings?

Let's read on in our text here. Verse 9. Does this blessedness then come only, Come upon the circumcised only, Or upon the uncircumcised also?

[21 : 43] For we say that faith was accounted To Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While He was circumcised Or uncircumcised?

Not while circumcised, But while uncircumcised. 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.

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.

So, circumcision comes up again. The Jews thought they alone Were righteous. They were God's chosen people. They had the law, Followed it to the letter.

The sign of circumcision Had been given to them alone. They were righteous. So as we've heard A couple of times already, And we're only in Romans 4, But circumcision keeps being brought up.

[23 : 03] We see it here in our text again. Circumcision. It's a big deal to the Jews. Circumcision started with Abraham. And from his descendants, From there forward.

Yet when was it that Abraham Believed God And was counted righteous? It was long before he was circumcised. It was back in Genesis 15, verse 6.

We heard that before. That's where Abraham believed God. It was accounted to him for righteousness. And this sign, or this seal, Of circumcision, We read of that, That is instituted.

It comes in in Genesis chapter 17. And as it's been studied into, It's said that this came in, Circumcision came in Anywhere from 14 to 25 years After what was written in Genesis 15, 6.

Where Abraham believed God And it was counted as righteousness. So we see that That justification, It came by faith. It had nothing to do with the circumcision.

[24 : 20] It had come before. So after God had made this covenant with Abraham, Circumcision was commanded to the Jews As a sign or a seal Of what had taken place beforehand.

So it was commanded to the Jews. Circumcision was. Today we don't practice circumcision. Yet we too, We have a command from Scripture as well.

As a sign of the justification That has already taken place Through our faith in Christ. That command is baptism. In Matthew chapter 28, verse 19, The Great Commission, Jesus gives the commandment To make disciples of all nations, Baptizing them in the name of the Father And of the Son And of the Holy Spirit.

And then in Acts chapter 2, Peter has just preached his first sermon, And it's cut to the heart Of the many of the people. And they ask, What must we do to be saved?

The crowd is convicted. The answer to their question is, Repent and be baptized. So we do have this commandment.

[25 : 48] And there are several examples Of water baptism That follow throughout the book of Acts As people believed, Came to faith in Jesus. They believed. And we see these examples there.

Now water baptism Is not what makes us righteous. It is a sign. The same as circumcision Is for the Jews. And yet it is a command To us To do as a sign To show what has taken place In our hearts.

The circumcision of our hearts. Moving forward, What are some things That keep us From God's blessing?

Justification by faith. That's as big a struggle today As it was for the Jews Back in Romans Here in the Bible times.

How can salvation be a gift Given free of charge? Surely we have to do Something to earn it, right? So many have the sense That you have to do To do something To work for Or somehow To do something Now this idea It's firmly rooted In our flesh We must do something To receive something Where does this kind Of thinking lead though?

[27 : 26] This thought That we need to earn it The answer is Right there at the end Of chapter 3 We had last Sunday Speaking of boasting If we earn it It gives room For us to boast And what is boasting?

It is pride in ourselves And we know From scripture God resists the proud But gives grace To the humble It's James 4.6 It's only by humbly Accepting the free gift Of salvation That we are justified And credited With righteousness From God And that we can be Showered with God's blessings What else holds some You ever heard Someone say You can't have any fun If you're a Christian So many believe That Christian life Is too serious Can't do anything fun Can't enjoy life It's just hard

It's hard to be a Christian Or it's boring to be a Christian And they might say I'll think about it I'll consider it another day I'm not ready yet Or Many have the thought I still have time I'm young I want to enjoy life first Yes the Christian life It is serious That's because We're considering eternity Our destination After this life And we're serious About getting there God didn't intend For us to not enjoy life Though He wants us To enjoy life I don't know about you But I still have fun I enjoy life As much as anyone does My kind of fun Might not be What a sinful person Considers fun But I have fun And what's more

I have joy in my peace Knowing my eternal Destiny is secured And I'll take that Over anything This world can offer As fun So in conclusion Let's consider Abraham He believed God And it was accounted To him for righteousness Let's each one of us Be in Abraham Let's believe God Let's believe in Christ Jesus And his finished work On the cross By this faith This belief We are justified And because of this faith God himself Counts us Righteous And he blesses us Allow yourself To be blessed Let's pray Father in heaven We come humbly Before you And we thank you

We thank you For your plan Of salvation We thank you For your son Jesus Whose shed blood Has covered our sins And cleared our debt Before you We thank you For counting us Righteous Through our belief In you And father We thank you For the rich blessings You bestow on us Thank you For your word And thank you For the example Of Abraham May we too Be in Abraham And believe your promise To us Father We love you And we want to serve you May you guide us Throughout the rest Of this day In Jesus name We pray Amen Amen