

# Abraham Our Witness

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us here in our time of worship here at SBC. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here.

Just to, before I get into today's sermon, and let's just turn in our Bibles to Romans 4. Turn in your Bibles. Something's bad going to happen. I think I spilled somebody's wine.

If you just take a quick note, there was a mission trip, or is a missions trip mentioned. I just want to thank you. The goal was exceeded far and above what was needed.

So I contacted the ministry. So basically, the ministry that I am going over with is partnered with a group called TMAI. That is from my seminary, the Master's Seminary, where they go out and they set up these institutes all over the world.

So I'm speaking at one of the primary churches involved with them. So I had just simply asked them, what could we use the extra resources for? So what they have, and if we want to continue giving, which I'm going to ask you to, if you'd like, they actually have a student from India who's moving to Manila just to study seminary.

[ 1 : 23 ] So there's been different varying attempts to get a seminary established in India, but they've been back and forth with it.

But right now, the seminary in Manila is now pretty much the, it's big, well, it's bigger, it's established, it's got several solid biblical churches supporting it.

So if you'd like, I said, anything that we have beyond what we've given, we will give to support this young man as he's moving, transitioning from a whole other culture to a whole other culture to study the Word of God. Amen?

So if you'd like to continue giving to that, just still please put Filipino ministry. So thank you once again, everyone who's been kind and generous enough to think about me and this ministry that's upcoming.

So this morning, we are now back into Romans 4 and Romans 5 for the next several months, actually. And before I get into the text itself, many of you weren't here when we began it, but I need to give you a little bit of a context about the church that existed in Rome to whom this letter is being received to.

[ 2 : 46 ] So Paul is writing this letter. We know that before this time, Paul had never visited Rome. In fact, there's no evidence of any apostle going to Rome, which we all know is the hub of the Roman Empire, right?

This is the most powerful, influential city in the West, right? That's why we have the saying, all roads lead to Rome. So it's interesting, as Paul was on his journeys, there's always someone coming or going to Rome.

So during his three missionary journeys, his contacts with all these different Christians, he knows what's going on at Rome. He's heard the reports. Now we believe that the church of Rome was actually founded by a group of believers who heard the apostle Peter's first message at Pentecost. Scripture specifically states that there were men and women from Rome. So we believe they heard that gospel, received that gospel that Peter had preached just after the ascension of Jesus Christ. They moved to Rome, started telling their friends, family, going to the synagogues, and a church grew as they came together. Now one of the strategies, because of the Jewish background, is that they would go in and you'd go back to the Old Testament and you would show where Jesus Christ or where the gospel has always been.

[ 4 : 13 ] And then they'd begin to understand the church. Now what happened at that time is because it's predominantly happened in synagogues, because that's where the Jews would have congregated.

It had a very distinctive Jewish flavor to the church. Now what we know is that many people got saved, the church grew, and along the way those outside of the Jewish faith, which we know is

Gentiles, got saved as well and were counted as a part of the church.

Now what's interesting, in Acts 18, and we know through history, the Emperor Claudius gets upset with the Jews because there's these battles going on between the Jews and the Gentiles.

And one of the things they do not have the ability to do, Rome in that time, was to distinguish who are the Christians, who are not. So they just go and expel all the Jews from Rome.

So Jews make a great exodus from Rome. So the Gentiles are still in Rome. And now guess what? A lot of those Jewish-flavored cultural norms start fading away.

[ 5 : 26 ] You with me on that? So then it starts taking on a little bit more of a Gentile flavor. So eventually what happens is the edict ends, and the Jews come back, and they basically say, hey dude, what's going on?

Things have kind of changed. Why aren't we celebrating some of the festivals that we used to? Why aren't we holding to circumcision?

How come we're not into Moses' law here? So all of a sudden, this great struggle goes on. And if you're familiar with the New Testament, this was a primary struggle that happened within the New Testament church, not just in Rome.

In fact, Galatians 2 speaks specifically that even Peter needed to be corrected by the Apostle Paul because even he was still holding on to the old way, the old faith, and making it Christian when God was not requiring that.

And in fact, there's a term called the Judaizers. And these were a group of people who would try to infiltrate wanting more Judaism within the Christian faith.

[ 6 : 46 ] You with me on that? So this is going on all over. And if you really begin to think about it, it kind of makes sense, right? Let's be honest.

This isn't a new thing. In fact, in our growth group this past week, we were kind of sharing our backgrounds, kind of a little bit about our testimonies. And a lot of people came from the Catholic faith, which is not abnormal in Canada.

And we kind of joked about there's certain things that many people who've come out of the Catholic faith still kind of carry today, right?

These ways of thinking. So in honor of the discussion that happened on the growth group, I've now designed a test to see if there's any Catholicism still found in you, okay?

So I'm going to give you this little test. And it's going to be the rhyme to, you know you're a redneck, right? All right.

[ 7 : 49 ] If you feel like God's in heaven with a clipboard just waiting for you to mess up, you still might have some Catholic in you.

If after sinning you secretly think you need to make it up to God, by doing something extra good, you still might have some Catholic in you.

If you carry guilt for years, even after confessing and repenting, because you feel like forgiveness can't really be that free, you still might have some Catholic in you.

If you still get nervous when you pray directly to God without a priest or a saint to help the message along, you might have a little Catholic in you.

If you sometimes wonder whether God is disappointed in you more than he is delighted in you, you might have some Catholic still in you.

[ 8 : 52 ] If deep down you think God's favor rises and falls depending on whether you've had a good week or a bad week spiritually, you still might have some Catholic in you.

If your first instinct is to do something when you sin, instead of trusting someone who has already done it, you still might have some Catholic in you.

And the final test, and if grace feels a little too good to be true, you still might have some Catholic in you.

Let me ask you a question. Does that relate to anybody? Does those points connect? Right? It's true, right?

We carry over our old heritage. So if you understand that as a Catholic, you now understand what's going on in Romans 4 and 5.

[ 10 : 00 ] And you're now going to understand why Paul is talking about what he's going to be talking about. It's like the old saying goes, you can take the person out of the old system, but the old system still lingers in the person.

So what's going on is they had these spiritual hang-ups, their heritage, circumcision, law-keeping, festivals, that made them feel good, that made them feel connected with God. And they knew about the Old Testament.

They knew about Abraham. But all of a sudden, when they're hearing Paul preach, that believers are justified by faith alone, they're saying, hold on.

Hold on. Paul, you are preaching a new gospel. How dare you? You said you came from our background.

You understand the Jewish faith. No, no, no. This is different than what we grew up with. So that's the Jewish issue. The Gentile issue going on at that time is, their worry, if God always and only works through Israel's laws and covenants and festivals, does that mean I'm going to be second class for the rest of my life?

[ 11 : 23 ] Does that mean I'm always going to be less than? So are you with me on that? Those are the two major overriding concerns. The Jew is thinking you're preaching a new gospel.

The Gentile is thinking, wow, I'm really not number one, right? All you kids who aren't the firstborn, you know exactly what he's talking about, right?

Firstborn, always the favorite. But anyway, those are the dynamics that are going on. So what Paul is going to get in here is so important.

It actually is the core of our understanding of the gospel. And in Romans 4, Paul's going to show us that, A, the gospel is the same, and he's going to show us through, like a court case in his first witness, is going to be Abraham in Romans 5, he's going to show not only is the gospel the same, but it's way better than you ever thought.

It's way better than you ever thought. That you can have full peace, full assurance of eternal life right here and now.

[ 12 : 40 ] That's how amazing these two chapters are. You know, David prayed about a very important thing today, about what's going on to other, what's going on in other countries, and Christians being persecuted.

So often we are blind to the real evils of this world. We really are. I don't know if you've been paying attention to the alt news. Anybody know about the ostrich farm issue going on in interior BC?

Some of you guys are knowing. All right. So, you know, you read that. That's a bit of a tragedy.

You're kind of wondering, these big, beautiful birds that seem to be, David Nerry doesn't agree that they're big or beautiful, or beautiful probably.

You know, these people have been raising these birds, and they used to have a flu, but two, I don't know, like 400 of them or so have lived, but the government still wants to kill them all. Right?

It's easy to tug at the hearts. And that's what a lot of things in our life do. Do I think it's horrible what's going on there? Yes, but I don't have all the information.

[ 13 : 51 ] And it's easy to forget what's really going on when real people are being killed for their faith in other countries. And it's all because that's what the media puts in front of us. Right? This is what's being talked about.

It's the same thing with this book. This book is not light. This book, in fact, is life and death. The issues we're going to talk about defines what our eternal destiny is.

Because here's the thing. If Abraham was justified by works, you guys had better start working harder. If Abraham was justified by law, you had better keep the law flawlessly.

Flawlessly. If Abraham was justified by ritual, you'd better not miss a single ritual. Do you understand?

If we're wrong on this, we got a lot of making up to do. But, if Abraham was justified simply by faith, we now have hope.

[ 14 : 59 ] We have hope. That there is hope for a group of people for us guilty sinners. For us guilty sinners.

If faith saves us, then we have hope. And here's the key verse that hangs over this whole passage that we'll be going over for the next two weeks.

It simply says, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Now, I need you to hear me.

This truth is not negotiable. This is not one doctrine among many. This is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls.

If we mess this up, we meet in vain. Luther called justification by faith alone the article by which the church stands or falls.

[16:02] If we lose this, you lose the gospel. If you blur this, you blur salvation. If you add works to faith, you destroy grace.

And if you're here thinking today, I'll stand before God and hope my good deeds outweigh my bad ones. I can tell you right now, you do not know God and you have no hope.

So here in Romans 4, we find ourselves in a courtroom. And the reason I say courtroom, if you were here for the first three chapters, you know, I process this through a courtroom motif.

Paul's acting as a prosecutor or a defense lawyer depending on the text. And the reason is it's sometimes a little bit awkward to read, but Paul is anticipating questions, questions that he's heard over and over and over and he's now putting these down to paper.

So here's the question that obviously gets asked first. Why Abraham? Why not Moses the log graver? Why not David the king? Why not Isaiah the prophet?

[17:22] And here is the reason. Abraham himself was the foundation stone of Jewish identity. He was the foundation stone of Jewish identity.

He was the father of nation, the friend of God, the one every Jew looked back to and said, that's my lineage, that's my proof that I'm good with God.

So, this morning, if Abraham can prove that, if Paul can prove that Abraham, who is the greatest hero of the Jewish faith, was not justified works, was not justified because of his circumcision, and was not justified because of the law, but simply by faith alone, the entire system, the Jewish system of self-righteousness falls apart.

It falls apart. So there's two simple things I want to address this morning. One, I want to look at this man, Abraham, and two, I want us to look at the faith of Abraham.

So here's my first point. Abraham, the man. We find this in verse one and two, and let me just read the first two verses again.

[18:44] 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.

Before we go any further, let me just pray. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we are truly getting at the root of the gospel, and I know there's some aspects of this are repetitive.

It needs to be said because Paul wants to make this painfully clear. Even though we have had the book of Romans for over 2,000 years, we still mess this up.

In fact, there's a whole religion based on Peter, this popish religion, that is simply saying that we are justified by faith and works, where we're going to hear today the crux of the Protestant church, that Paul is quite simply saying we are justified by faith alone.

So let us hear these words. Give us understanding, O God. Give me clarity of voice. May we ask your spirit here to help us understand these truths.

[20:14] Father, let your word be the one to convict us. Let us be here to, I'm not listening for my neighbor, I'm not listening for my spouse, I'm listening here for me.

And Father, through this, may our worship be enhanced because we have a greater understanding of our God and Father. We ask you things in these names, and we ask you these things in your name, O Father.

Amen. So what Paul's essentially doing, he's on trial and he's bringing up his first witness. You Jews, you believe that Abraham was saved by works.

Let me bring him up on the witness stand for you this morning. And notice he says, he begins his case by basically saying that Abraham, the patriarch, the forefather, this is the man that every Jew revered.

Now notice his phrase, our forefather. Father, I'm in this with you. He's identifying himself to his Jewish readers and he's saying, look, I'm not dragging in some outsider, I'm calling in our hero.

[21:24] This isn't some fringe guy, this is the man that we revere. I am, like he is the one. And the one you claim as your father in the faith, guess what, I claim the same thing.

Now let's examine this case. We do know that the Jews did indeed consider Abraham their father. If you remember John 8, 39, Jesus Christ is confronting some of the people who are there and they're caught dead in their sins. These are the Pharisees, the religious rulers, and he turns around, they turn around and say, well, Abraham is our father.

He's not yours, he's our. What they're saying is, by virtue of them being Jewish, of having them as father, their lineage guarantees their place with God.

Now, where are they getting that? Well, we know that there was rabbinical writings that went so far to say that Abraham was justified by his obedience, that he was justified by his hospitality, and he was justified by his faithfulness.

[ 22 : 41 ] Now, notice what I'm saying when I say they weren't saying he was justified by faith, he was justified by his faithfulness. So that means there was a set of rules that were there before and he followed those rules, therefore he was justified.

That is what the old rabbinical writings were saying. Some ancient Jewish sources taught that Abraham fulfilled the whole law before it was even given.

And what they did is they turned him into a model of works righteousness. But Paul blows that all up.

He says, in effect, if Abraham was justified by works, then sure, guess what? He would have something to brag about before you, but not before God.

Do you understand this boast? See, here is Paul bringing up boasting again. We talked about this last Sunday. Because the reality is boasting is the essence of self-righteousness.

[ 23 : 47 ] If you think you've contributed anything to your justification, you will at some point glory in yourself. last week, we learned that God says there will be no boasting in his courtroom.

And what's interesting is Abraham's story illustrates that. If Abraham had a reason to boast, he had this. Remember, he used to live in the land of Ur of the Chaldeans. We believe that's around modern day Babylon.

God appeared to him, called him to this new land to father a whole new people. And guess what? He didn't ask for proof. He just went and did it. Right? That's kind of an amazing thing.

He obeyed, called to go to a land he had never seen. And he trusted God for a son when his body was as good as dead. And remember the story of Isaac, even after having the son, put him on the altar and was going to slay his son.

If you were looking for a resume of faithfulness, you've got it in Abraham. But here's the truth.

[ 25 : 02 ] It impresses us, but it doesn't impress God. None of those works that Abraham did earned his justification. It's like it says, Paul says, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Before people, maybe. If he showed up in the synagogue, hallelujah, this man should be revered. Give him the biggest seat in heaven. Nope. Silence.

And here's the reason. God doesn't grade on a curve. God demands perfection. And perfection is not found in Abraham's works, but perfection is found in the grace of God.

Now, I want to spend some time on this word justified and I want you to understand this. This is a legal term. What it means is to declare righteous.

And what this means is when God justified Abraham, he did not make Abraham righteous. Do you know what I'm saying?

[ 26 : 14 ] It's not like he made him without sin. It's impossible. He's sinned. But he's declaring himself righteous because he poured his wrath on his son, Jesus Christ.

You with me on that? And then he's counting when he looks at Abraham, he's looking at the sacrifice that his son, Jesus Christ, gave. He did not infuse Abraham with some sort of moral virtue. But it's simply about God pronouncing him righteous on the basis of faith. So what we have is justification is a verdict, not a process.

You with me on that? And guess what? You're only justified once. You only need to be declared righteous by God once. That moment when you believe, when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, when he extends that hand and you take that free gift of eternal life, guess what?

You're justified for eternity. Amen? Amen? Doesn't ask you to go do more works. He doesn't tell you you can't fall away and then be re-justified.

[ 27 : 31 ] You are justified. So justification is not a lifelong process. It is a one-time event. And Paul is crystal clear if justification were based on works, it would give Abraham room to boast.

But the whole point of justification by faith is that it removes boasting and magnifies grace. Amen? Justification brings glory to the cross.

It does not bring glory to us. It's not our works that bring it glory, but the work that happened on the cross of Jesus Christ.

So, when Paul makes this statement, the courtroom would have been in awe. It would be just talk, cross talk, what is going on?

I can't believe he just said that. We've been taught our whole lives that Abraham was the gold standard of righteousness, and he was the father who proved that if you obeyed, you were in, and now Paul is saying, no, no, no, Abraham wasn't justified by works at all.

[ 28 : 44 ] There's a scandal. Everybody would be tweeting right now, right? Get it out. Can you believe what this guy Paul just said? It would have been scandalous. This is like a lifelong Catholic hearing that the Pope can't earn righteousness through the sacraments.

It's like telling a devout Muslim that Muhammad can't bring justification through obedience to the Quran. It's like telling the moral, church-going, upstanding person in the pew that your volunteer hours and moral behavior won't cut it.

How would they have received it? It would have been offensive. It would have stung your pride. And here's what else it is.

It's liberating. It's liberating. Because Paul is clearly tells us it means righteousness forgiveness. It's available to those who have no works at all. For the someone who thought they had to come to the temple to offer something, who had nothing, this is liberating.

[ 30 : 07 ] God is because that is when we are proud and we are all involved in our religiosity. This stings us because it means, you mean all my works were worth nothing?

I'm not saying they're worth nothing. They might be worth favor with man. But were they worth something to God? God, not at all.

But Lord, I gave you 50 years of church service. I ushered every day. I gave. Don't matter. Let's be honest.

We boast in many ways. Some of us boast in our upbringing, right? I was raised in a Christian family. Some boast in their church activity. I serve on the worship team.

I preach. I lead a group. I tithe faith. faithfully. Some boast in their moral record. I don't drink. I don't cheat. I don't lie. And I don't hang out with people who do.

[ 31 : 13 ] But in some people boast in their theology. I've got sound doctrine. I'm not like those other people who go to those other churches.

But this is where Paul leans across the witness stand and says, not before God. You see, religious boasting is one of the hardest things to root out in the human heart.

And this is why Paul keeps continuing to say this over and over and over. Because we want so badly to have something in our hands when we stand before God.

God. Whether it's a pebble or a mound of things. We want something. But God will accept nothing in your hands but faith in his son.

And this is why the gospel slices into human pride. salvation by works sounds flattering because it tells you you're capable but salvation by works also damns you because you'll never be good enough.

[ 32 : 29 ] You get that? Makes me feel proud but it damns me at the same time. But salvation by faith sounds offensive because it tells you you're helpless but it saves you because God himself provides the righteousness.

Amen? This is the genius of Paul's brilliant move right here in the courtroom. Paul takes the strongest possible example of human righteousness Abraham and he strips it bare.

If Abraham can't boast before God guess what you can either. So what Paul makes clear here is that your works are inadmissible in the courtroom of God.

Now let's look to the second point. I want us to look at the faith of Abraham found in verse 3. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Boom. the brilliance of Paul's argument is that he doesn't rely on speculation or tradition here. Paul doesn't say what did the rabbis say?

[ 33 : 55 ] Paul doesn't cite the oral legends about Abraham. You know what Paul does? He goes right to the pages of scripture. And I don't know if many of you guys know but in the Old Testament rabbis would write commentaries so to speak on the text itself.

And it still goes on to this day. A lot of people do not understand Judaism. Even within the quote unquote family of Judaism. There's all sort of whacked out cults because they follow some crazy rabbis teaching that really had nothing to do.

And if you say wow that never happens in Christianity oh really Jehovah's witness Mormonism goes on all over the place right? They speculate they take these man made speculations.

So they had their own commentaries and they would have expect Paul to cite them. And friends this is where every question about salvation must be answered.

you see our commentary often is our culture right? We like to determine truth what's going on in our culture. Sometimes we like to find truth in our tradition.

[ 35 : 17 ] If you're like me in personal opinion. In the musings of men. But the fact of the matter is any truth about God has to be found in the written word of God.

Amen. The rabbi said Abraham was justified by work Paul says hey let's check that record. Let's check that against the pages of scripture.

So here we're going to turn to Genesis 15 6. Simply says Abraham believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness.

So I'm going to put it up on the board behind me if you want to look it up there look it up in your Bibles. By the time Abraham 15 rolls around it has been about 10 years since Genesis 12 rolls around.

If you remember Genesis 12 that is called the Abrahamic covenant. This is when God appeared to Moses and made him these promises. And one of those promises that he would have a son and that son would give him a nation and so much more.

[ 36 : 27 ] We studied that when I preached on the Abrahamic covenant earlier. But let's just start at verse 1. It says so you need to understand the context here.

Abraham is lamenting. He's lamenting. He has no son. He knows God made him a promise but he's 75 years old. He's 75.

His wife is 75. It says after these things the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision. Fear not Abraham.

I am your shield. Your reward shall be very great. What a powerful statement to have God say to you.

But Abraham said, Oh Lord God, what will you give me? For I continue childless. In the air of my house is Eliazar of Damascus.

[ 37 : 32 ] No, nothing against Eliazar. But Eliazar was a servant that he found in the land that he was and he was lamenting the fact that and at this time many people believe Abraham would have been one of the wealthiest people in that area with all that the Lord had blessed him with and it would have gone to a foreigner.

It would not have gone to his family. Verse 3 and Abraham said, Behold, you have given me no offspring and a member of my household will be my heir.

And behold, the word of the Lord came to him. This man shall not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir.

And this is the beauty of God. And he, God, brought him, Abraham, outside and said, Look toward heaven and number the stars.

If you are able to number them, then he said to him, So shall your offspring be. Verse 6, And he believed the Lord.

[ 38 : 49 ] And he counted it to him as righteousness. So here is Abraham thinking his body at 75 is as good as dead.

Think of his wife's womb is as good as dead. By all human calculation, it is utterly hopeless. And then God takes him outside. Look forward.

Look toward heaven. Number the stars. If you can count them, so shall your offspring be. And Abraham, in the face of impossible odds, simply believed.

He took God at his word. And at that moment, before Abraham was commanded to be circumcised, before, almost 500 years, before the law would eventually be given to Moses, before his son is even born, God declares him righteous.

Notice that term. It was counted to him. Again, we're seeing an accounting term. It means to credit, to reckon, to place in the ledger.

[ 40 : 04 ] It's like picturing your bank account. If most of you are like me, usually very little in it, or possibly you're over withdrawn, and then all of a sudden, someone wires you a billion dollars.

Now, it's important to notice when he credits that, you did not earn that billion dollars. God credited it to your account. That's what happened with Abraham. He didn't possess righteousness in himself.

God credited it to him. And it's the same thing for you. Your account is bankrupt before God. Worse, it's in debt. You've racked up debt with sin over sin over sin.

And then, through faith in Christ, God credits to you the perfect righteousness of Jesus. This is justification.

John MacArthur says it this way. Faith is not righteousness. Faith is the channel through which righteousness is received. God counts Christ's righteousness to the believer's account.

[ 41 : 15 ] Let me be crystal clear. Abraham wasn't justified because faith itself was a meritorious work. Faith isn't a deed you perform to earn favor.

Faith is the empty hand that receives the gift. It's all it is. It's Jesus, I trust you. faith. That's faith. Faith is trusting God's promise in the face of impossibility.

Martin Lloyd Jones, one of my favorite preachers, back in the last century, said, we are not saved because of our faith.

We are saved by faith because of Christ. In other words, faith is not the grounds on our salvation.

Lloyd Jones continues, he says, what saves us is that Lord Jesus Christ and his perfect work.

What saves us is the death of Christ upon Calvary's cross. What saves us, it is his perfect life that saves us. And it is God putting Christ's righteousness to our account that saves us.

[ 42 : 28 ] You with me? It's God putting that money in that bank account of ours that saves us. Faith is the means by which we receive that account, that salvation.

In other words, faith is the pipeline through which God transfers Christ's righteousness to you. faith. Now you need to understand that this blows everything about the Jewish pride apart.

They thought that righteousness came through circumcision, came through law keeping, came through being a child of Abraham. But Paul says, check the record. Abraham, how were you saved?

By faith. faith. What works did you do? None. That's the answer. See, it's not the work, that works are unnecessary for Christian life.

That's the fruit of salvation. But our works are not the root of justification. The root is faith. And what Paul has demonstrated here, it's always been faith.

[ 43 : 43 ] Now, why does this matter to us? And you've heard me say it all the time. We fall into the same trap. We know this doctrine of justification by faith alone, but we live like it's faith plus something.

Faith plus church attendance, faith plus good parenting, faith plus ministry success, faith plus avoiding big sins. righteousness. But scripture says Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Let me conclude by telling you why Abraham is such a compelling person. If you know, the Bible tells us about his life.

We know more about Abraham than most people mention in the Bible. guess what? He wasn't all that holy. In fact, Abraham is an encouragement to the one whose faith is weak.

We do know that Abraham's faith wavered. He doubted, would God ever give me a son? And he cheated on God's promise, slept with Hagar, his wife's handmaid, kind of trying to work his own way to get the blessing and who bore him a son, but it was not from his Sarah, his wife.

[ 45 : 16 ] But God counted him righteous, not because his faith was flawless, but because the object of his faith, which is God himself, was faithful.

Amen? So what he's saying here, when we look at him, we're discouraged in this Christian life. God doesn't judge us on our weak faith. He judges us on what our faith is in.

Amen? It is the perfect son of Jesus Christ. So Abraham serves as an encouragement to the one whose faith is weak. We've all had those moments.

Sometimes those moments for some of us are our whole lives. But God still holds us. Amidst the sin, amidst the trials, amidst of the stupidity, the wisdom, the foolishness, God still holds us.

Second, Abraham is an encouragement to the one who wants to depend on works, to make themselves feel more secure.

[ 46 : 26 ] Nobody says they count on the works, but it always makes them feel a little bit better just knowing I did something good. Abraham brought nothing to the table.

God did it all. Guess what? You don't either. And number three, Abraham is an encouragement to the one who was crushed by their guilt.

Before Abraham, Abraham was Abraham. He was actually an idol worshiper from Ur, a man who was full of flaws and failures.

Yet God declared him righteous the moment he believed. Well, this tells us that no matter your past, what you were involved with, who you were involved with, does not matter to God.

That moment that you say you believe, your sins are cast aside as far from the east as to the west. They're no longer counted.

[ 47 : 36 ] God says specifically in the scripture, I no longer remember those things. It's funny, eh? We remember more than God. God. So the verdict from scripture through this man, Abraham, this witness is clear.

Faith, justification, does not come by works, does not come by circumcision, does not come by the law, but comes by faith alone. And here's the good news this morning.

The same verdict can be yours right here, right now. If you will believe God's promise in Christ, if you will trust in his finished work on the cross, God will credit your account, the righteousness of his son.

Doesn't matter who you were, what's going on. I believe it is God who justifies me before himself and you will be saved.

If you do that in this courtroom today, you will hear the gavel say, not guilty, righteous, justified, go in peace.

[ 48 : 57 ] Let me pray. Dear Lord, heavenly, holy father, we thank you. For this message that you give to us through this incredible book of Romans.

Father, I'm finding it to be such a rich delicacy that every word is purposely situated in the right sentence, the right phrase to say purposely what you're trying to say.

Father, I just pray that I can mine it sufficiently to communicate this truth, this truth that offended the Jews and offended the righteous.

Next week, we're going to get into it more, but we thank you for this morning and being able to come under. And I pray that we would truly understand this. And I just pray that we'd be honest with ourselves.

Why do I do the things that I do? Do I do them to earn some sort of better standing before God? Or do I just do them because I've been redeemed by God who credited my account with a sum that I could never, ever pay?

[ 50 : 13 ] And because of that, I'm eternally thankful. And now I can walk in the newness of life, understanding that I have been eternally made right with God because I took his hand.

In your name I pray. Amen.