

# Romans 4:1-12

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 4. Romans chapter 4 has been some time, a number of weeks since we've been in the book of Romans, and I have to admit to you, while it's only been a week since I preached this morning, I felt like it was the first time I had ever preached again.

Those butterflies were back. I'm always a little bit nervous, I always get a little antsy before I stand up, but that nerve that was kicking in, that was so fresh when I first started preaching, was there again, and that is a great thing.

I want to thank you, brother, for singing that song. Great message and word in that song about the table. I don't know about at your house, but at our house, the table is very important.

We love our table. We have a table that's much too big for the spot that it's in. It tends to kind of push you into the wall, and it gets a little crowded, but we refuse to make our table smaller because we have extra chairs, because we anticipate more people being there, and we have to bring those chairs out so that we can sit more people around our table.

At our house, the table is very important. And I have found that the more you're at the table with those whom you love and the friends and family around you, the less problems you have away from the table.

[1:10] A lot of things, a lot of problems are solved at the table. And when you have time to sit there, it may start with a meal, and it will end with a problem. And I love that analogy, how we're invited to the supper of the Lamb, we're invited to that marriage feast that we can sit at His table with all of our problems.

We can sit at His tables with all of our failures. We don't have to come perfect. We don't have to get cleaned up before we get there. He'll clean us on our way there, right? We can just come sit at the table with Him.

And our every issue or every problem, before we get up, it'll be different than when we sit down. And my prayer is that you have a table at your house that's much that way, or you find a table and you get around friends and families.

Remember, one of the key pillars to the early church was fellowship, breaking their bread in one another's houses with gladness and simplicity of heart. It is important to gather around a table. Romans chapter 4, verses 1 through 12 this morning.

If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God. It's found in Romans chapter 4, verses 1 through 12.

[2:18] Paul writes to the church at Rome here, just continuing this great teaching on salvation. It says, What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, according to the flesh, has found?

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

Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. Now, is this blessing then on the circumcised or on the uncircumcised also? For we say faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.

[3:18] How then was it credited? 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 uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all

who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them.

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.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. Oh God, we rejoice in every opportunity we have to open up your word. Lord, and God, we pray that the words we have heard this morning, Lord, that they would continue to speak to our hearts.

Lord, I pray there would be no hindrance in this place, but we would see the truth of your word.

God, we would not only see the truth, but we would also see the application that it has for each one of us individually. We pray that by the presence and power of your spirit, Lord, that you would speak to us.

May it not be my words, but may it be your words and yours alone. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. We have been looking at, we have missed a couple of weeks due to our 150th celebration and then my absence last week, but we have been looking at this great book of Romans.

[ 4 : 43 ] And when I first introduced the book of Romans to you, I laid it out that it is the foundational doctrines of our faith, that while all of the Bible carries with it equal weight, and the word of God, every part of the word of God is there for correction, for reproof, for instructions unto godliness, as Paul would write, the book of Romans stands alone, apart from any other book of scripture and any other book of the New Testament.

While it was written to a particular church, that is the church at Rome, it was not written to one location, because, as many of us know, the church at Rome existed in numerous spots throughout the city of Rome.

It was not just one, like, first church of Rome. There were just a bunch of little churches gathered around the city of Rome, and Paul would have written this letter to them to be circulated among the churches.

One thing that is unique about the church of Rome that you may remember, and if not, I'll remind you of, is that we do not know who started the church at Rome. It was not founded by Paul. It was not founded by Peter.

It was not founded by James or John or any of the other apostles. Most believed that it was probably someone of the Jewish nation who made the trip to Jerusalem, and happened to be there when Peter stood up and preached his sermon on Pentecost.

[ 5 : 59 ] And hearing the Pentecostal message of Peter, came to the salvific knowledge of Jesus Christ by faith alone, and took that good news back to Rome, and had to share it with everyone else.

So the church at Rome is so different in that it was started by lay people, that is, a normal church member. And Paul is writing to Rome not to address a problem, because he has never met any of the believers at Rome.

He has never personally been to the city of Rome. He knew some of the people who were attached to the church, because he had met them in passing in his missionary travels, but he had yet to make it to that great city, though he longed to go to Rome, and even go beyond Rome into the regions of Spain, and to take the gospel where it had never been taken.

Paul would eventually make his way to Rome as a prisoner, and would eventually find the fulfillment of his faith, that is, his death, at the city of Rome. But at the present time, he's writing to a church, not to correct any wrong practices, not to address any major issues, as he did in a number of other of his letters.

Rather, he is writing to a church to teach them what they believe and why they believe it. It is a strictly doctrinal message. It is all about salvation.

[ 7 : 18 ] He says, you say you believe in Jesus Christ, you say you're trusting in Christ alone. Let me explain to you what that means. Let me show you why it's so important. And there are some things in Scripture that we call minor issues.

And we can disagree on the minors. We can disagree on certain aspects. We can disagree on things called eschatology, that is, the end times.

I believe in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. I believe that before everything gets bad, the church is going to be called home, and we will be with him. The tribulation is a seven-year period of all those. I have certain beliefs of end times.

But if you don't believe exactly as I believe, if you believe in a post, that is, after tribulation rapture, or even if you believe in not a rapture of the church, we can still fellowship.

We'll call that the fellowship of the burning heart. We can still agree together. There are minor issues throughout Scripture that we do not have to see eye to eye on, and we can still be in fellowship.

[ 8 : 16 ] Then there are the major issues. And my friend, we must major on the majors, and we must agree on the majors, or somebody is wrong.

We cannot all be right. And when we come to the book of Romans, Paul is laying out the major issues. How is a man justified in the sight of God?

How is a man made right in the sight of a holy God? How can a sinful man, a man full of problems and failures and shortcomings, how can that type of man come and sit down at a table with God when the Old Testament tells us that anything holy in the presence of God is completely annihilated because He is holy, holy, holy?

And Paul is answering those questions. How can we, sinful man, with all of our failures, with all of our messes, with all of our shortcomings, how can we dare come into the presence of a holy God and think we can be accepted by Him into His presence with open arms and hear Him say, I love you, my dear child.

How dare we say that? Some would answer that and say, well, if I'm good enough or if I work hard enough or if I do enough deeds or if I put enough check marks on my list, if I read my Bible, if I pray so many times a day, if I'm sure I go to church and if I give X amount to the church, if I make sure I give my 10% and I don't do anything and if I don't short God, if I do all of the right things, then God is sure to welcome me into His presence.

[ 9 : 43 ] The only problem is that for the first three chapters, Paul shows us that nobody does all the right things. Paul shows us in three chapters, only takes him three chapters, and he sums it up and says, there are none who have done righteous, no, not one.

There are none who are good, no, not one. All of us have fallen short. We have all messed up. I don't care how long your list is, I'm sure there's something you missed. And in God's economy, if we sin once, we're guilty of all.

God doesn't grade on the curve. God is holy, holy, holy. Thrice holy. It says it all throughout Scripture. It repeats it. Every time the Bible says three holies, especially when you get to the book of Revelations, it means He is absolutely 100% holy.

He is perfect. And the only thing allowed into His presence is perfection. And Paul comes to this conclusion and says, well, even our conscience bears witness with us that we have messed up. I dare say that every one of us, if we're honest with ourselves, would have to agree with the Word of God that says, I know I'm not that good. I know I'm not perfect.

[ 10 : 50 ] And that's the bad news. And then Paul begins to make the transition at the end of chapter 3. He says, but there's good news. I'm so thankful that he only took two and a half chapters to show us how bad we are so that he could take the rest of the Scripture and show us how good God is.

Because that's really what the Bible is about. It introduces for us in Genesis 1-11 how bad man is. And then in Genesis 12 to Revelations 22, it shows us how good God is. Because we do not need to major on how bad we are.

We must major on how good He is. The big thing, we must first understand how bad off we are because we need to know what the problem is. I love honesty. I want someone, we call it true talk at our house.

I want true talk. I want you to come up and to tell me the problem and I want you to tell it to me straightway. Don't kind of beat around the bush. Don't sugarcoat it. Don't do any of those things, right? Just go ahead and tell me if it's messed up.

We've seen some of these. Maybe you've seen the videos, the injuries in football recently, some of the gruesome injuries. And you watch the videos and you see the running back from 49ers who's putting his arm down. All of a sudden, his arm's going the other way.

[ 11 : 52 ] Everybody on the field knew his arm was broke. He didn't have to have a doctor walk. It was just true. Like, dude, that's messed up. Your arm's not supposed to go, from your elbow down, it's not supposed to go the other direction. Or the leg that's broke.

You know, it's not an if, and, or but. Like, it may be messed up. No, that thing's messed up. So now let's get it fixed. And that's kind of the way God deals with us. He says, you have a problem. You're messed up. There's an issue there.

Now let me tell you how I can fix it. Paul introduces at the end of chapter 3, he says, But now, even in spite of man's ugliness, in spite of man's problem, but now the righteousness of God has been revealed.

Not the righteousness of man. The righteousness of God is available to all who believe. But in chapter 4, he is now addressing an argument. An argument that not only is found among the Jewish people, but an argument that is found among the church people today, and an argument that is found among every good old boy and good old girl that you will ever come across.

An argument that I myself argued for a majority of my life. I came to Christ shortly before I turned 21, so I've not yet reached that halfway point.

[12:56] But I argued that if I am good enough or I'll be okay. And these things, and listen, these people are okay. They're good. The argument for the Jewish people was, yes, but look at Abraham. Look at our faith.

Look at the things we have going on. We have all these rules and all these laws, and God gave us these laws. And these laws exist for a purpose. And God told us through Moses how we can be accepted to Him.

Is that really what He said? So Paul is going to talk to us this morning. If you have to have a title, and yes, it took me that long to do my introduction. If you have to have a title, I want you to see the historical reality of faith.

Is faith, salvation by faith and acceptance to God, acceptance of God by faith alone, really a new idea? Or is this something that has always been going on?

Because many will hear this, well, I've never heard anything like this. All my life I heard that you were supposed to be good enough, and God would accept you. Or all my life I heard that I must work, work, work. And all my life I've heard that I had to do, do, do.

[13:57] And the Jewish people, of all people, is a great case study said, all of my life I have remembered, that I memorized Scripture all my life. Every Jewish boy, by the time he was 12, would have memorized the book of Deuteronomy.

Anybody know what Deuteronomy stands for? Deuteronomy stands for literally second law, the second telling of the law. That's what the word stands for, which means it is the retelling of the law that was given in the book of Exodus, in Exodus chapter 20.

So by the time they were 12, they would have had all these standards and these legalistic rules memorized, and it's great Scripture. Deuteronomy 4.24, probably one of my favorite verses in all of Scripture. And it is there, given.

And these people said, all my life all I've heard is I have to do this, and I have to do that, and on the eighth day I have to be circumcised, and I have to be sure to do this. And now you're telling me, Paul, you're coming to me telling me that this is something different, that all I have to do is accept and believe by faith?

Paul, this is something totally new. Paul says, wait a minute, this isn't new. Let's go beyond Moses. Let's go all the way back to Abraham. I love how Paul finds a common ancestor, right?

[15:02] Because he introduces chapter 4, he says, what then shall we say of Abraham, our forefather? This is why it's so good, because Paul is of the Jewish people. Paul is also of the believing people and the people saved by faith and faith alone.

He says, I'm not telling you anything new. I want to lay out for you here, he says, the historical reality of faith. Number one, I want you to see in this historical reality of faith, the confession of Scripture.

Look at what he says. He says, what then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, according to the flesh, has found? He says, let's go back to Abraham. You want to talk about the Jewish legalism? You want to talk about the rules and standards of the Jewish people, how we're God-chosen people, and how we're special and all this?

He says, then let's go all the way back to the beginning. Do you understand that if you want to find how something is supposed to be, you have to go back to the beginning? Right?

Things evolve. Things change over time. Things are originally created for one thing, and all of a sudden, they become used for something else. No one at the very beginning of the creation of a computer could have ever envisioned that man would be carrying them in their pockets.

[16:09] I mean, the computers used to take up the whole room, and I think the quote was, someone said that the average American will never have a use for something like this, and now the average American cannot imagine life without something like that.

They're in your pockets, and most of them are running crazy right now, and you're getting all these notifications and all of these things, and quite honestly, if we had to be truthful, most of what we used the computer in our pocket for was not what the computer was originally created for. You know the computer in your pocket was not originally created to tell you that somebody down the road is eating chicken sandwich right now. I mean, believe it or not, it blew our mind. Teenagers were like, what? I thought that's why we had those things, so we could know what everybody had and what they're eating and what they're wearing, and we needed it all.

That's not what that's for. We used to do this thing called talking for that. We had conversations. But see, you always have to go back to the original. They call it the Gen 1, the Generation 1, and Paul here, he says, okay, we want to talk about Judaism and all these laws and all this legalism, then let's go back to Gen 1.

Let's go back to Abraham. The forefather. Where it all started. Let's go back to him and see what he found according to the flesh. And he goes on, for if Abraham was justified by works, if, as you are arguing, he was good enough, and God accepted him because he was good enough, because some of the Jewish scholars said this, that while Abraham didn't have the fullness of the law, Abraham looked into the future.

[17:32] Now this is actually what the Jewish scholars of Paul's day would say. That Abraham looked into the future and saw the law long before Moses was ever given the law and lived out the law perfectly and God accepted him.

Now the problem that I have with that is maybe you forgot where Abraham was from. God called Abraham from the land of, what was that? Ur of the Chaldeans. Anybody know what Ur of the Chaldeans is?

Ur of the Chaldeans is out there around Babylon. Anybody know what happened in Babylon? Babylon was literally the birthplace of idolatry. Abraham was called by God from the center of idolatry.

And I don't want to bust your bubble or anything, but more than likely, Abram was an idolatrous individual worshipping a number of other gods. See, one thing I love about Scripture is when you read Scripture you find stories full of ordinary, messed up people.

Because everybody I meet is just an ordinary, messed up individual, especially the man I meet in the mirror every morning when I get up. I don't find anything perfect. So he says, what should we find? If Abraham found anything according to the flesh, then he has something about to boast.

[18:39] But he says, not before God. He's essentially saying, hey, you may be good, you may be doing all these things, you may have as many check marks as anybody else. As a matter of fact, he said Abraham may have had more check marks than anyone else, but he can't brag before God.

He has nothing about which to boast. Let's go on. We're looking at the confession of Scripture. Here he says, for what does the Scripture say? Just stop right there. For what does the Scripture say? Here, Paul is doing something that we must essentially do today and we must always do today. And he is doing something with the people of his own nation, the Jewish people, so that he would show us what we must do among the people of ourselves and the people like us.

We're not trying to pick on the Jewish people, it's just we know that Paul is reaping into them. And he did this very same thing with the Gentile people too. He says, what does the Scripture say? He does not say, what do the scholars say?

Because the scholars would say, well, Abraham was perfect and his behavior was excellent. He does not say, what does the popular opinion say? He says, what do the Scriptures say?

[19:41] Friend, listen, the beginning of every argument and the ending of every argument must start and end with this. What do the Scriptures say? The Word of God must be where we begin and it must be the final authority on every stance we take.

There are a lot of people today who would tell you that acceptance by God or acceptance to be accepted in the sight of God you have to do a number of things and there are a long detailed list. If you look at the major world religions around the world there are some very detailed lists of you must do this, you must do that, you must do this, you must do that and if you do all these things then you will be welcomed into the presence of God and if you fulfill all these obligations and if you do this

and if you do this to an extreme sense then you'll get this authority.

The question is, what do the Scriptures say? I really don't care what modern thinkers say, I really don't care what scholars say, I don't really care what intellectuals say.

The question I have to ask are what do the Scriptures say? And I don't have time this morning, I would love to take time because you say, yes, but you're holding another set of Scriptures and other people around the rest of the world will hold up another set of Scriptures right.

So then we have to justify which Scripture is actually accurate. And you will find out if you do a lot of study or as a matter of fact you won't have to do very much study at all, it'll probably only take you a couple of days, it will only take you a little bit of time to realize that there is no other manuscript in all of the world that has such historical and accurate reliability as the Word of God from Genesis to the Book of Revelations as we have it contained in our Bibles.

[ 21 : 10 ] There is no other Scripture in the world that has as much testimony among believers and non-believers, among scholars, scientists, and experts as the Holy Bible as we have it contained in the 66 books from Genesis to Revelations.

This is the sealed Word of God. And I don't care what their Scriptures say, I don't care what this writing says, I don't care what Homer's Iliad says, I don't care what Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet says, I just want to know what do the Scriptures say?

Because the honest answer is it is the confession of Scripture that tells us man is accepted by faith and faith alone, not by works. It is not the opinion of man.

It is not even the interpretation of those Scriptures. It is a very clear teaching. And Paul starts where we must always start and says, what is it that the Word of God says? And what I'm so thankful for is Paul goes back to the Old Testament.

Do you know that you can preach Christ as much from the Old Testament as you can from the New Testament? Do you know that you can preach salvation by faith alone as much from the Old Testament as you can from the New Testament? Because he goes on for it.

[ 22 : 18 ] He doesn't just say, he says, what do the Scriptures say? Now the second thing I want you to see, not only the confession of Scripture, the second thing is the credit of righteousness. Look at the credit of righteousness.

So now he asks the question, what do they say? And he answers it in verse 3. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Now he is quoting Genesis 15. It's a pretty amazing Scripture. You need to go read Genesis chapter 15 sometime because in Genesis 14, Abraham goes on this.

I mean, Abraham, let's not think he was a weak guy. I love this. Remember, Lot gets himself in some trouble. Lot goes and hangs out down there around that real pleasant valley around Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot hanging out down there ends up getting taken captive by these five kings. Remember the story? Some of them fell in tar pit. Some of them didn't. Seven kings had battles against five kings and the five kings won and Lot got carried off. Someone runs and tells Abraham who's hanging out out here in the wilderness where the land doesn't look that good, has all his livestock.

[ 23 : 19 ] Somebody runs out there and says, Abraham, Abraham, Lot's been taken captive. I love this because you think that believers are so weak and mamsy-pamsy but I love coming across manly men in Scripture.

Teach your boys to be men. Okay? And that's one of the things. I mean, we just, I believe in, I'm not talking about this over masculinity. Teach them to be the men that God is calling them to be.

And I love this because somebody runs up to Lot and says, Abraham says, Abraham, Lot's been taken captive. Abraham says, I'll take care of that. Those five kings took him. So Abraham gathers the men from his people and then his 300 men and Abraham and his 300 men go whoop-whoop-whoop those five kings.

And they bring back Lot. And they come back. And then he meets this great king named King Melchizedek on the way back. But then, after the heat of the battle, because Abraham's a man just like us, right?

In Genesis 15, all of a sudden, Abraham goes, whoo, what did I just do? I just destroyed five kings, but those five kings all had subjects and those subjects are probably going to come after me.

[ 24 : 21 ] Reality hit him. We've all done that, right? Men, maybe you kind of get carried away.

Maybe ladies, you do too. Maybe sometimes we have this thing called adrenaline rush and we do

something that sometimes, I don't know about you, but I remember growing up, my mouth had a tendency to outrun my brain and sometimes I would get a little carried away and all of a sudden I'd realize this guy's a little bit bigger than me and I would try to figure out how I could backpedal my way out of there because it was always kind of like this whole Genesis 15 thing, like, whoo, what did I do?

It's time to get out of here. There's a lot more of them than there are of me. I told the boys not too long ago, I remember when Carrie and I were dating, she's from Central, she went to Shelbyville Central, don't hold that against any of you guys, I went to the greatest school in the world, Cascade, you know, I mean, that's just kind of how it is.

At Cascade, things were different. When I graduated from Cascade, I graduated with 45 people, big class, I mean, it was huge, so things were kind of welcomed there. I went to Carrie's Junior Prom with her and I remember I was just going to wear what I always wear.

It was my prom attire. I had black Wranglers with a belt buckle, a cowboy hat, and a tuxedo top. I went out and bought a new set of black Wranglers so the black would match my tuxedo top.

My black felt hat, looked great, right? I said, this is the first time I'd ever been through a metal detector because at Cascade, you don't walk through metal detectors. So we go into her prom, there's this thing, like an airport, you walk through the metal detectors, of course I set it off.

[ 25 : 36 ] I tell the boys, of course I did because I had pretty much a small hub tap as a belt buckle on my belt. And then they waved the wand over me and I'm like, I promise, this is just my belt buckle. And at that time, you know, here I was, I was 17, I was like, you know, I'm big, I got this, no problem.

Carrie's like, you're really wearing a cowboy hat in there. I was like, it's not a problem. I got this. Nobody can mess with me. And we went into the gym and we sat down and all of a sudden I realized, I'm the only Cascade boy there and I didn't quite have it as much as I thought I did.

Because there's a whole lot of central boys there who aren't too fine of cowboy hats. And then there's me. And I looked at Carrie and I said, we staying long? It was that Genesis 15 thing that, uh-oh, it's probably time to go.

Thankfully, the Lord was good to me and He covered up a lot of my ignorance over the years. And I have what also happened in Genesis 15 where God says to Abraham, Abraham, don't worry, I'm your shield, I'm your protection, I'm your guard.

I've got you. And then Abraham says, we're coming back to this credited righteousness, Abraham says, well, if you're so good to me, God, then why is a slave the inheritor of all my state? And God says, come outside, Abraham.

[ 26 : 42 ] It's always good when God takes you outside, right? Why don't you come outside for a minute? He says, Abraham, this is Genesis 15, you need to read. He says, look up into the heavens. Abraham looks up at crystal clear night. He says, Abraham, can you count the stars up there?

And Abraham says, I can't, there are too many. And God makes a promise. God says, Abraham, as if you could count the stars, you would be able to count the number of descendants that will come forth from you. That's a promise, right?

That's a promise. And it says, and Abraham believed God. You know what the word believed there means? It says, Abraham said amen. That's literally what it means. He amended him. It's okay to amen God every now and then, all right?

If you're reading scripture, you come across a promise, you just say amen because that's all you can see. Amen literally means let it be. So let it be. And Abraham's sitting here. God takes him outside and says, look up at the stars.

If you could count the stars, you would be able to count the number of descendants that come forth from you, Abraham. And Abraham goes, amen. And it says, and at that moment, it was credited to him as righteousness.

[ 27 : 39 ] Friend, let me ask you, what did Abraham do? Nothing. What work had he done up to this time? Nothing. What would he do after this? He would lie twice about his wife.

He would stumble. He would fall. There would be this little thing with Hagar. We know all about that. There would be Ishmael who wasn't supposed to be there. There would be all these failures, but he had righteousness credited to his account because he simply said, amen.

He took God at his word and said, if God's promised it, I'm going to live like it's already happening. I'm going to believe it. I'm going to accept it.

And we see here that Paul says, to him who works, when he's given something, it's not a credit. It's an earning. It's a wage. It's what's due him. If he works, give him his pay.

But for he who believes, it's not due him. If he believes, it's given to him. It's a gift of God's grace and God's mercy.

[ 28 : 40 ] It's a gift of righteousness. And he tells us here about this credited righteousness. What is it that Abraham, the founder of the Jewish people, did? He simply believed.

And friend, listen to me. What is it that God wants us to do? Amen. Every one of his promises. God says, if you'll trust in me, if you'll put your faith and hope in me, I'll forgive you.

If you'll allow me to be the Lord of your life, I'll accept you. If you'll follow after me and live my life, then I'll welcome you. Then you say, Amen, Lord. So let it be.

And you live your life different because of the promises of God's word. It is not because you earned it. It's not because you deserved it. It's not because you worked for it because none of us have done that.

We've just accepted what God has promised and we've accepted it by faith. We see here that it was credited to him as righteousness. Number three, not only do we have the confession of scripture, the credit of righteousness, and I'm making my way quickly, we have the covering of sin because we still have this problem of sin.

[ 29 : 46 ] So God gave him a credit. He gave him a credit of righteousness. Now Paul is using a Jewish thought here that if a word is mentioned once in scripture, then we can find it used in the same manner elsewhere.

Okay? Since it says in Genesis 15 that it was credited to him as righteousness, he knows that David writes a psalm after his sin with Bathsheba. There's a number of psalms that he wrote after his sin with Bathsheba.

And it is like, I think Psalm 37, and he uses the same word credited, and it will always mean the same thing. And that's something that we find throughout scripture. Okay? We need to understand that scripture harmonizes.

We don't have it reading that way because we're reading it in English translation, but he says, just as David also speaks, we're in verse 6, of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.

What did David write? Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven. Wait a minute. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven. How have they been forgiven? Have they been forgiven because they did enough?

[ 30 : 48 ] Have they been forgiven because they worked hard enough? Have they been forgiven because they reached the level? No. Whose sins have been covered. There is no forgiveness without the covering of sin.

But who covers them? Look at verse 8. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. Now that take into account is the same word as credited. He says, here's the deal. This is what's so great about God, God and His grace and His mercy.

God gives us the credit of righteousness, but He does not charge to our account the credit of our sin. And that's grace and grace alone. Our sin deserves death.

Our sin deserves eternal separation. Our sin deserves punishment. Our sin deserves all of these different things. And the Bible really clearly says you're either going to get one of two things put into your account. the righteousness of Christ as a credit or the wages of your sin as a credit, but you cannot have both of them put into your accounts.

And it does not depend on what you do. It simply depends on who you believe. If you want to work to earn your salvation, if you want to earn your own righteousness, you'll never do it because the wages of your sin will always be greater than the wages of your righteousness.

[ 32 : 03 ] you will never be better than the price of your sinful actions. But, if you allow God to graciously cover those sins.

You know, the Bible says that only God can choose to forget something. And He can cast your sins as far as the east is from the west and throw them into the sea of forgetfulness. And the Bible says He will choose to remember them no more.

And when He looks at your account, He'll see the righteousness of Christ and not the deserving punishment of sin. It is the covering of sin. Now, I have one more thing if you'll stay with me. Now, look at the covenant that is sealed. Because we still have this argument and it is an argument that speaks much the same today. We read here in verses 9 through 11 about the circumcision. Now, I don't know if while I was reading it how many times you realized, man, could Paul said circumcision one more time? It is circumcised this and circumcised that and circumcision this. But circumcision is a very important thing to the Jewish nation.

[ 33 : 06 ] Circumcision is something that is so major and important to the Jewish nation that it was a law and, you know, still is in Judaism today that on the eighth day every male child should be circumcised.

And that circumcision was a sign, now stay with me, that circumcision was a sign of their acceptance by God. It was not just a sign of their acceptance by God, it was actually their door to the acceptance by God.

That the moment they are circumcised, they are accepted by God because they have the seal of the covenant on them. So much so that they would say that a Jewish individual who is no longer accepted by God, that they really believed an angel of God would come down and uncircumcise that person, take their circumcision away.

Because in the Jewish thought, it was impossible for a circumcised man to be cast from the presence of God because that guaranteed his acceptance. Circumcision was very important. So Paul asked the question, well, if righteousness was credited to Abraham, when was he called righteous?

[ 34 : 18 ] Because that's important. Paul says, and I can almost see the Jewish people going, oh, was he called righteous while circumcised or while uncircumcised?

And just so you know that Genesis 15 happens 15 years prior to Abraham being 99 because at the age of 99 is when he is circumcised.

15 years before his circumcision, God calls him righteous. And Paul says, now let's just think about this just for a minute. If Abraham was righteous, and that means accepted by God, if Abraham was accepted by God 15 years before he was circumcised, then why was he circumcised?

What is the purpose? What is the meaning behind it? What's going on here? We see here that he says, so Abraham was declared right in the sight of God.

until it's been a week since I preached because my voice is not conditioned or I'm going too long. Abraham was declared right in the sight of God before he did anything.

[ 35 : 34 ] So, Paul says, well, the circumcision is a sign that he is already right with God. Now, let's bring this to more contemporary terms.

Okay? Let's kind of lay it out there. The good news is what Paul is saying before I bring it around and kind of wrap it into you. The good news is Paul says, this is really what is so amazing, literally, Abraham was a Gentile when God declared him righteous because before you could be a Jew, you had to be circumcised.

So, the gift of God is given to Gentiles. Now, Gentiles is good because Gentiles is everybody. Jew is a select. Abraham was not a Jew until the circumcision according to the law of the Jewish people. So, what he is saying is Abraham is the father of all. He says, now, no longer is it circumcision which makes one a Jew, but it is the acceptance of the word of God by faith and faith alone that makes one a Jew.

Why? What does the word Jew mean? Jew comes from the name Judah. Judah means praise. To be a praise to God. So, to be a praise to God, it is not to have something done in the foreskin of the flesh.

[ 36 : 53 ] To be a praise to God is not to have a physical act done to you. To be a praise to God, it is to believe God and to take him at his word and to say amen to everyone of his promises. Now, let's bring it back to today's time.

There are many who claim that before you can be saved, there is something you have to do. There are a number of things. That before God can accept you and declare you righteous, there are things that you must do.

One of the leading things to point to today is baptism. It is called baptismal regeneration. It is saying that before you can go to heaven, you must be baptized, and baptism is a requirement for salvation.

Now, that is scary because that has taken the place of the Jewish circumcision, saying that there is something you must do to be accepted. But we see in the picture of the circumcision literally what the picture of the baptism is.

The circumcision was a sign pointing to an already righteous declaration. I have been righteous for 15 years and now I am going to get to the circumcision. I am going to show everybody.

[ 37 : 55 ] Don't ask me. I believe it was Tommy who was here. He said aren't you so glad that we don't have that as a sign today? We walk around going, see, I told you I was circumcised.

If you don't, you can explain that to your kids later. Don't want to make that a public display for everybody to see. It's kind of a little private matter in today's times. But it was a display that I am God's person.

I do belong to him. He has made me righteous already. It was a sign. Baptism, much the same way, is a sign of a salvation and a righteousness already given.

I wear on my hand a wedding ring. I do not wear the wedding ring that Carrie put on my finger 20 years ago. The wedding ring was made of gold. I broke that wedding ring working out for a while. I wore a stainless steel wedding ring. Because stainless steel doesn't bend, doesn't work, it's pretty good. It actually lasts up pretty good.

[ 38 : 55 ] But here's the reality. If I took my wedding ring off, it would not make me any less married. All this ring does is tell the rest of you I'm married.

All this ring does is testify to the world of a reality that already exists. If I take this ring off, some of you can't wear a ring. Some of you for some reason or another you can't. Maybe it's a job. Maybe it's something else. And you choose not to or you can't wear a ring. I remember when I worked at Nissan for a while I was down trimming chassis and you weren't supposed to wear rings. I'd have to cover mine in tape and I'd have to put tape on it.

Some didn't wear on it. But that didn't make you any less married if you didn't have the ring on. It just means that it wasn't as obvious. I remember one of the first things that Carrie and I went to in the ministry thing we went to a thing for pastors and we were there and they had this breakout session where the pastors would go one way and the pastor's wives would go another way and I'm going to tell a secret on Carrie and some of you will see it later and it was kind of this round table thing where these older pastors would talk to the young pastors about this is how I do sermon preparation and Carrie came back and at that time I had been pastoring about three or four years and I I because she stood beside him it is a sign do you know what baptism is it is you the bride standing beside your man publicly and letting everybody know

I'm going to let everybody know that's my man I'm going to stand beside him I'm going to get wet I'm going to follow him I'm going to make a public display does that mean that you are any less saved if you are!

[ 41 : 20 ] baptized no that just means you ain't letting everybody know you're already saved now is baptism important absolutely it's the first command given to the believer be baptized why because your bridegroom your husband wants you to stand beside him he's jealous for you and he wants everybody to know he's your man and he wants you to stand but does that mean that you haven't where someone accepts christ and they don't follow does that mean no listen friend it is a sign of a covenant it's already been established by faith you are saved by faith and faith alone it is when you amen every promise of god's word and you agree when he says that if you'll follow me i'll have you sit at my table if you'll surrender your life to me i'll welcome you to my presence it's you going amen amen amen to every promise of scripture and that's all that's required and we see that all the way back to the man abraham it is the historical reality of faith let's pray lord i thank you so much for this day god i thank you for giving us the opportunity to be here to see your word or if there's one here today who's never accepted you by faith lord would you soften their hearts would you draw them to you lord maybe there's some here who've never made that public display lord never shown the world of a reality that is already present abraham waited 15 years maybe they've been waiting a long time lord whatever it is you want us to do today god we pray that you would show us by the presence of your spirit just draw us closer to you god we would walk in sweet fellowship with you as we leave here we ask it in jesus name amen■■■

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 46 : 10 ] Thank you.