



7/28/25

What a great week of VBS we had last week. Between volunteers and kids we had over 1700 people involved, all lifting high the name of Jesus... and 51 kids experienced what today's passage is talking about... putting their faith in Jesus Christ and receiving the free gift of righteousness, justification, and forgiveness. It is so cool to see the living word of God lived out!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Romans 4:1-8

Vs. 1 ~ Romans 3:28 said, "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law." So... if that's the case, then what about Abraham? He is "the father of many nations." What did he discover based on his flesh? Did God make him the father of many nations because of his own awesomeness? Nope.

Vs. 2-3 ~ If Abraham had been chosen based on his works, he might have something to boast about before men... but even then, he would have no reason to boast before God. He is still a created being, and God is still the Creator. But in truth, when God chose Abraham in Genesis 12, He said nothing to Abraham (who was called Abram at that time) about being worthy of the call. It says God blessed Abraham and counted him righteous. It doesn't say God paid him his wages for being righteous.

In fact, it wasn't until 3 chapters later (after Abraham failed God by sleeping with his wife's servant and having a son with her), in Genesis 15, that God said anything about Abraham's works or character... When God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, as numerous as the stars, and "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness." This gift from God had nothing to do with his own character. It was about Abraham trusting the character of God.

If I look at the works of any person, I will always find reason to say the person is not worthy

of the blessing God gives. When I look at myself, I KNOW I'm not worthy of the blessing God gives to me. But I'm looking at the wrong thing. I need to be looking at God's generosity. He blesses me simply because I believe what He says. I don't have to earn His approval. He freely gives it to me because I trust Him enough to open my hands and receive it.

Vs. 4 ~ If I were to be able to say my works accomplished anything, then what I receive from the Lord would be expected. It's what He owes me. But as it is, the righteousness I have from Him is a gift.

I watched a show recently where one of the characters did something wrong, and he went to the person he wronged and asked, "What can I do to earn your forgiveness?" The truth is... there is NOTHING we can do to EARN anyone's forgiveness. Forgiveness doesn't cost the person who did the wrong. It costs the one who cancels the debt. Before God, I wasn't even close to righteous. I was in such enormous debt from my sin that I couldn't pay for it. Then God canceled the record of my debt and nailed it to the cross (Colossians 3:13-14). The only thing I did to receive that gift from Him was believe His payment was what I needed.

Vs. 5 ~ What makes me righteous before God is that I believe I can't do anything to be counted righteous, AND I believe that He is the one who justifies the ungodly. He is the only one who CAN justify the ungodly. No one is godly before Him UNLESS He justifies him. The only thing I do to be counted righteous is believe Him... trust Him... put my faith and confidence in Him.

This is so massive for me. I don't know if I'll completely understand the security I have in the Lord until I get to heaven. As much as I want to embrace the freedom I have in Him because of Jesus, I still recognize my thoughts and actions that don't line up with His, and I "feel" like He must be disappointed and angry with me. But I have so many scriptures that prove my feelings wrong.

- There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ~ Romans 8:1*
- For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast ~ Ephesians 2:8-9*
- "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin ~ Hebrews 10:16-18*

These are just a few! O Lord, please help me to speak truth to my heart. Your word says that the truth sets me free!

Vs. 6-7 ~ This truth of righteousness by faith has been recorded in scripture thousands of years! It was spoken about Abraham. It was also spoken of by David. God's blessing on me has

nothing to do with my works. My works are only an outpouring of gratitude based on my faith in His blessings.

Paul quotes from what David said in Psalm 32:1-2, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." It does not say, "Paid are those who work to earn God's forgiveness, who pay for their mistakes. Paid are those who earn enough to cover their debt." I can't cover my debt. I am poor and needy... but the Lord takes thought for me (Psalm 40:17). I NEED God's blessing of forgiveness and righteousness and justification because my debt of sin is so great I could never repay it. "Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless His holy name... He does not deal with me according to my sins, nor repay me according to my iniquities" (Psalm 103:1, 10).

What does God do?

- *He justifies me (even in my ungodliness).*
- *He counts me righteous.*
- *He blesses me with righteousness and forgiveness.*
- *He does not hold my sin against me.*

What is my one and only responsibility?

- *Believe Him.*

O Lord, You are who You say You are. You do what You say You will do. You have the power and the wisdom and the insight and the goodness and the compassion and the love to accomplish all Your promises and blessings. I believe You. I receive Your gifts. I will stop looking at myself and whether or not I measure up... I will never measure up. Instead, I will look at Jesus... at the gospel. He measures up for me. "For freedom Christ has set me free. I will stand firm and not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).