



7/29/25

*When our girls were little, we took them to the Children's Museum in St. Louis. Some people love that museum. I think it gave me PTSD. Hahaha. Toward the entrance of the building there was a tunnel that was so narrow I was afraid I was going to get stuck. Sometimes I "feel" like living the Christian life is like that tunnel... like God expects me to live in this tiny narrow dark space and any wrong move will get me stuck. If all I had to go on was my feelings, I would be hopeless. But He has given me His word that proves over and over again that living IN CHRIST is a life of freedom. It is the life set on the flesh that gets stuck in that dark tunnel. It promises fun and adventure, and it's just a dark tunnel.*

*I see this expressed in today's passage in Romans. Paul was writing this letter to help these believers understand what I need to be reminded of CONSTANTLY, or I will let my deceived feelings take me to a dark, narrow tunnel. God BLESSED me with HIS righteousness BEFORE I did anything to honor Him. I never had to earn my way to Him. No one ever had to earn their way to Him. Christianity is the one and only religion where the deity reaches down and saves the lost. Every other false religion requires the person to appease its god.*

*God makes it clear that salvation does not come through works even from the time He called Abraham, who is called the founder of three different religions... Jewish, Muslim, and Christian. But only one of those religions has the way, the truth, and the life... Jesus. The Jews still believe that the law is their salvation... though it never really was. They reject Jesus as the Messiah. The Muslims came from Abraham's illegitimate son, Ishmael... and they follow a false god. They see Jesus as a prophet, but nothing more. Christians come from every tribe and tongue and nation... and they are called the sons of Abraham because of their faith in Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham, "I will make you the father of many nations." Galatians 3:7-9 explains that God even spoke the gospel to Abraham... "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."*

*This brings me to Romans 4:9-17. What do I learn about faith in this passage? And how will*

*that impact the way I live?*

*Vs. 9-12 ~ "Is this blessing (of righteousness and forgiveness) then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?" Who are the circumcised and uncircumcised? The circumcised are the Jewish people. Circumcision was instituted with Abraham as a sign that he was God's chosen. It was required that all Jewish babies were to be circumcised on the 8th day after they were born. The uncircumcised are the Gentiles, anyone who is not Jewish.*

*Circumcision is REALLY important for the Jews... it's a sign of obedience, and the physical representation that they were God's chosen people. The biggest and most important part of that is what they were chosen for... to be the lineage of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. Sadly, when He came to earth, they rejected Him as the Messiah... as Isaiah 53 prophesied that they would.*

*Here, Paul makes a really important point... God blessed Abraham for his faith and counted him righteous BEFORE Abraham was circumcised. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul also makes the point that God blessed Abraham 430 years BEFORE the law was given. Abraham's circumcision was NOT the blessing, but a sign that he had already received the blessing. Circumcision was a "seal." Ephesians 3:13-14 tells me that, in Christ, a new and better seal has come. I have the greater seal of the Holy Spirit... and Colossians 2:11 tells me that I have a greater circumcision, the circumcision of Christ. Romans 2:29 reminds me that "circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit."*

*Why did God circumcise Abraham AFTER He counted his faith as righteousness? "To make him the father of ALL who BELIEVE without being circumcised." This was for a purpose... "so that righteousness would be counted to the uncircumcised as well." What makes me "a daughter of Abraham?" NOT circumcision... NOT the law... but "walking in the footsteps of the faith."*

*This is SO IMPORTANT for me to get!!! Faith and freedom go hand in hand... both for my salvation AND for my sanctification. By faith, I received Jesus as my Savior, and by faith I walk with Him in this life until He takes me home. I was not saved by the law, and I will not be sanctified (transformed to be like Jesus) through the law. The Spirit sealed me and the Spirit transforms me (2 Corinthians 3:18). All the energy I put into trying to appease God and work for His approval is WASTED energy. I need to live by faith... humbling myself before Him and trusting Him to love me, make me secure, and help me obey Him. O Lord, please help me to depend on You more and more! As David Powlison said, "Maturity in Christ is submission to Him." The more I grow in Christ, the more I submit to Him and let Him be my strength rather than trying to do things in my own strength.*

*Vs. 13-15 ~ God's promise to Abraham and his descendants that he would be the heir of the world, the father of many nations, didn't come through the law. It came through the righteousness of faith. Faith pleases God so much that He counts all who trust Him as righteous.*

*The law can't do that! I can think of three huge problems with the law.*

- 1. The law is impossible to obey without fail. Galatians 3:10 says that everyone who tries to earn their righteousness by the law is cursed because they can't do it perfectly.*
- 2. Living by the law incites pride and shame... Pride rises up if a person thinks he can do it well. Shame takes over if the person thinks he can't. True faith takes humility. Humility and pride along with shame are in opposition to each other.*
- 3. The law is about rules, but not relationship. God created us for relationship. Obedience to Him without relationship is like a parent whose child does the chores but refuses to talk to her parents about her life, her joys, her struggles... refuses to let her parents comfort her when she's sad or celebrate with her when she's happy. God created us for relationship. Jesus came to sacrifice Himself in order to restore the relationship that man severed by living for SELF. Revelation 21:3 says that when it's all said and done and we have a new heaven and a new earth, we will have fully restored relationship with God ~ "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be WITH them as their God.'"*

*If the law is what makes someone an heir of God, then faith in Jesus means nothing and the promise of righteousness and salvation is gone. The law only brings wrath... condemnation. Where there is no law, there is no breaking of the law. O Lord! Please help me to get this!!! If the law is not my salvation, then the law cannot condemn me when I sin against You!!! That doesn't mean that I should just ignore what pleases You... that wouldn't be living by faith. It does mean that I humbly live in gratitude to You, run to You for help when I fail You, and praise You for Your mercy.*

*Vs. 16-17 ~ What happens when I turn to the Lord in faith? The promise of righteousness and forgiveness rests on the grace of God, not on my obedience to His law. When I try to please Him by earning His love through obedience, I feel the weight of condemnation and not rest... because that is muscling it and it doesn't work. But when I understand that I was saved through God's grace and not my works as it says in Ephesians 2:8-9, then I can also understand that I stand in God's grace... always. His grace is His delight and pleasure lavished on me even though I don't deserve it. I have to stop thinking that I should be doing something to deserve it. I ALREADY HAVE His approval, His righteousness. His grace is GUARANTEED to me because "it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham" (Galatians 3:7).*

*It was in God's own presence that He made Abraham "the father of many nations." God did this because Abraham believed Him. God is the one who gives life... eternal life... to the dead, which is what I was until He brought me to life through faith in Jesus. He called me into existence from what did not exist. Just like He created the world from nothing, He gave me life from the dead.*

*Once again, I see that my only responsibility in this passage is to believe Him. Everything I do for Him and with Him has to start with FAITH in Him, not in myself, not in the law. O Lord, please help me to live in the freedom of faith. This life with You is NOT a narrow, dark tunnel. Matthew 7:14 tells me the gate that leads to life is narrow... Jesus is the gate. But when I walked through that gate in faith, He brought me into a beautiful, "broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me" (Psalm 18:19). O Lord, I believe! Help me in my unbelief! Amen.*