

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit**  
**The Law of Faith: What Does Scripture Say?**  
**Romans 4**

Last time...

- the condition of man-kind – Rom 3:10, Rom 3:23
  - made God-kind
  - fell to man-kind (by unbelief/sin)
- by the Law is the knowledge of sin
  - 1 Tim 1:8-10 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, (murderers of babies) for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;
- by another Law by which we can be justified – the law of faith
  - Rom 3:27-28
    - man-kind made Jesus-kind (by faith/grace)

This time...what does Scripture say about the law of faith?

We are in Rom 4

- v1-2 Accordingly, given Ch 3:27-28, what shall we conclude about Abraham?  
If he we justified..."cleared" of wrong-being and all wrong-doing...  
by works...his performance and merit...  
he has something to boast about – to us but not to God

Comparing and competing leads to boasting

BUT the comparison is not horizontal (to us, man-kind) but vertical (to God, God-kind)

As descendent of Adam and Eve, he is also imperfect, his obedience to God was not perfect; Ch 3:27a applies to even him

- v3 What does Scripture say?  
What does unchanging God say in His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word,  
our Final Authority on all matters of doctrine?

Gen 15:1-6

Abraham believed/trusted God...took Him at His Word that He would do what He said

He was going to do

and it was counted unto him as righteousness...imperfect Abraham was pleasing to and accepted by God

Therefore grace was given to Abraham for his wrong-being and all his wrong-doing  
By grace thru faith, Abraham was forgiven and justified

The Greek word translated “counted” appears 11 times in this chapter  
“counted”, “reckoned”, and “imputed”

It means

- accounted as...regarded
- attributed...considered to be
- ascribed...credited as belonging to

By grace thru faith Abraham was

- regarded by God as
- considered by God to be
- credited by God as

righteous/pleasing/accepted

v4-5 Grace: a gift of forgiveness from God to the undeserving sinner

If I work

- to be pleasing to and accepted by God based on my work/performance/merit
- for an employer doing a job he/she hired me to do

I am owed a reward/wage for my labor

- God is indebted to forgive me and save me from eternal death
- my employer is indebted to pay me our agreed upon wages

Perfect obedience is required to make God a debtor to a “work-er”

But none are good/perfect, no not even one

The perfect God is never indebted to any imperfect person for anything!

Therefore, justification (the Judge’s sentence/verdict) can only be by grace and NEVER  
by the Law

Given Rom 3:23, the sinner who approaches God by faith based on the  
work/performance/merit of Jesus Christ, the sinless Lamb of God,  
is given grace and regarded as, credited to be, righteous

Rom 3:24-26

v6-8 David, an imperfect man after God's own heart, is another example of this Biblical truth

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul quotes Ps 32:1-2, a psalm David was inspired to record AFTER being forgiven of adultery (Bathsheba) and murder (Uriah)

The blessedness of the man...good fortune (grace) given to a sinner who has been

- regarded by God as
- considered by God to be
- credited by God as

righteousness apart from the Law (perfect obedience required to not be a Lawbreaker)

So says Scripture

So has God said, Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18)

So can say every forgiven sinner,

a man-kind made into Jesus-kind,

no longer dead in sin but alive to God in Christ

v9-12 Who can so say Ps 32:1-2, that "I am righteous by faith?"

The Jew (physical descendants of Abraham) only?

The Gentiles also?

When was Abraham was reckoned righteous by faith...as so says Scripture...

when was God's righteousness reckoned/counted/imputed to him?

When Abraham was circumcised or when he was yet uncircumcised?

Uncircumcised

Counted righteous in Gen 15...circumcised of the heart (Rom 2:28-29)

Circumcised in Gen 17...the seal of righteousness of the heart by faith

Perhaps 15 years later

First: counted righteous by God because he believed

Then: circumcision, God's seal of that righteousness by faith

That makes Abraham the father of all those who believe God, Jew and Gentile

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise

v13-15 God's promise to Abraham was not given to Abraham based on his performance of keeping the Law...after all, the Law was not given for another 400 years...  
God's promise to Abraham was based on Abraham trusting God was good to His Word

Righteousness by grace thru faith preceded the Law...is NOT a NT concept/doctrine!

But the self-righteous and legalistic Judaizers, whose doctrine is sternly refuted in Galatians, believed they were righteous by works, by having and obeying the Law  
Thus, if the Judaizers are correct, then

- faith in God is empty and false, an exercise in futility
- the promise of God to Abraham is empty, toothless, the sleeves out of His vest

BUT the exercise in futility is righteousness by works  
Because obedience must be perfect  
Absolutely impossible for imperfect man-kind

Instead, the Law reveals man-kind's sin and accomplishes God's perfect justice, which leads to the justifiable wrath of the offended God  
Again, the Law

- reveals sin, does NOT give the just God a way to forgive sin
- declares right and wrong – God is right and all man-kind is wrong

Rom 3:19-20

v16 Therefore, the promise of God to Abraham stands on  
grace (God's gift of forgiveness to the undeserving sinner) thru faith  
so that promise is absolutely sure – utterly dependent upon

- God's performance and not man's
- God's righteousness and not man's (Is 64:6)

On Wed nights we have been studying Exodus  
Before the Law was given (Ex 20), grace thru faith was declared to Moses

Ex 3:2            bush: desert bramble, thorny...sin  
                     fire: the judgment of God  
                     not consumed: the grace of God  
                     I AM in the midst: the God of AI&J, pre-incarnate Jesus Christ

Ex 4:1-9            3 signs given to the Jews to believe God sent Moses

1. the Rod of Jesse made sin before ruling with rod of iron
2. leprosy/sin removed by...
3. the cleansing blood of the Lamb of God poured out for sinners

Therefore, Abraham is the father of all who believe what God has said

v17-22 As it is written...so says Scripture

Abraham is the father of many nations, just as God promised (Gen 17:5)  
BEFORE Abraham even had the son/heir God promised him

Abraham believed God would do as He said/promised (Gen 15:4-5)  
Abraham trusted the God Who

- makes alive that which is dead
- calls perfect those who are not perfect
- sees, hears, cares, and acts...in His own time and way

Abraham believed, had a confident expectation, that that which is impossible for man is absolutely possible for God

For Abraham, it was impossible to have a son, much less be the father of many nations. He was 99 years old and Sarah was 89 years old...beyond child-bearing years Abraham “knew” by faith that those insurmountable realities were of no consequence for the Living God

I was dead but “quicken” also by the Living God!  
Result: Nathan, Kathryn, Matthew – 3 miracle babies!

Abraham did not doubt God, he did not stumble in unbelief  
His was a strong faith, content in knowing what he knew and not doubting because of what he did not know...not knowing how he could possibly be the father of many nations but certainly knowing Who gave him that promise

Eloise trusts us; if we hand her food she without hesitation eats it.

So He praised the Lord, being fully persuaded (knowing beyond a shadow of doubt) that God could do as He promised – give him and Sarah a son and make him the father of many nations

Therefore, his faith was

- regarded by God as
- considered by God to be
- credited by God as

righteousness

Note: 34 years later, that faith was tested again (Heb 11:17-19)

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

v23-25 What is true for Abraham is also true for us!

#### The Law of Faith

- the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith
  - the righteousness of God is given to whosoever believes what God has said
- The Gospel of Grace  
The Gospel of God  
The Gospel of Christ  
1 Cor 15:3-4

#### The Perfect Lamb

- perfectly obeyed and fulfilled the Law
- surrendered His will to the Father's will
- was surrendered to unrighteous man
- was sacrificed as the Father's sin sacrifice
- satisfied God's perfect justice
- declares innocent ("Not Guilty!") whoever believes in Him

### **Application/Exhortation**

As were the followers of David

1 Sam 22:2 every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them

so are the followers of the Son of David

And when we believed, we were sealed with the righteousness of faith, circumcised of the heart

Eph 1:13-14 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

And now we can stand as Abraham stood:

- against hope believing in hope
- being not weak in the faith
- staggering not at the promise of God thru unbelief
- being fully persuaded that God is able to do what He promised

2 Tim 1:12 I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day

Phil 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

What is that good work?

1. Being conformed into the image of Jesus Christ
2. Sanctification
3. Growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Grace

NOT what I was taught in the religious education of my youth:

Sacraments give us grace (I earned God grace by doing the sacraments)  
we sin and lose grace,  
and sacramental confession and absolution cleanse sin and restore grace

But that is not what Scripture says

Eph 2:8-10a

Grace is God's nature

Ps 103:8-12 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Grace is not man-kind's nature!

Rom 3:10-18

Grace is a gift of God, given to those who believe what He has said

Faith is a gift of God

Free will is a gift of God

Grace is the gift when we willingly give back to God what He has given us – faith

So we who were man-kind but made into Jesus-kind by grace thru faith must learn grace.

We must truly understand the Gospel of Grace

The Gospel of Grace is always under attack

We must grow in the grace that has so radically changed us!

We are to be every bit as gracious with others as the Father is with us

Matt 6:14-15

Matt 10:8

Grace: how we bear the Family image