

FATHER ABRAHAM

Thursday, May 18

Reading: Romans 4:1-12

Romans 4:3 *What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

In Romans 4, Paul presents Abraham as an example of the truths he has just presented. Israel had always been proud of their heritage as the children of Abraham. They believed that this was enough to make them right in the eyes of God (Luke 3:8; John 8:37-40). However, Paul reminds them that it was not what Abraham did that made him right with God. It was purely by faith.

Although Abraham was obedient and followed the Lord's commands, this was not what saved him. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 to show that God's righteousness was credited to Abraham's account because he "believed God." When someone works a job their wages are not a gift from their employer. It is what they have earned. This is how most of the world views salvation – as something they have earned by their good works. But Abraham was justified by faith. He did not work for it but simply "trusted God who justifies the ungodly." As Paul has spent so much time explaining, everyone stands before God as unworthy sinners. Only God can change this position. Paul quotes David (Psalm 32:1-2) to reinforce this point.

He next gives an historical argument from the life of Abraham. God declared him righteous over 13 years before he was circumcised (Genesis 15-17). The Jews were trusting in their circumcision as a means of their relationship with God. But circumcision was an outward sign of the justification Abraham had already received. So Abraham's faith makes him the father of all who believe both Jews and Gentiles.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "Blessed are Those Whose Transgressions are Forgiven." To be blessed means more than simply to be happy. In the New Testament, to be blessed is connected with having God's kingdom in your heart (see Matthew 5:3-10). This kind of blessedness does not come through external circumstances or personal performance. It is the gift of God through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The believer's sins are forgiven and Christ's righteousness has been applied to the believer's account because of the love, grace, and mercy of God. Being members of God's kingdom brings eternal joy and blessedness to our lives. How should this blessedness affect the way we live our lives? How should it affect the way we face difficulties and trouble?
2. "Father of All Who Believe." I remember singing the children's chorus 'Father Abraham' in Sunday School as a child. I didn't understand the message at that time but it did give you a good workout, flapping your arms and legs while spinning around until you got dizzy. This chapter tells us how all believers are children of Abraham. It is by following his example of faith! Read over the life of Abraham in Genesis 12-22; especially chapters 15 & 22). He was not perfect. He made mistakes. But his faith in God and God's promises kept him going. Do you have a faith like Abraham's? Do you take God at His Word? Are you obedient no matter how difficult the task may be? Is your salvation based solely on the blood of Christ shed for you?