

Abraham & the Righteousness of God

I. Gospel — Power to Save — [slide 1]

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for **it** is the power of God for salvation **to** everyone who believes, to the **Jew** first and also to the **Greek**. 17 For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed from faith **for** faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

II. From Love to Law and back by Grace

(1:18-3:20 A detour to show the need for Christ's intervention)

A. Suppressing Truth —> Refusing Love (Rom 1:18-32)

Rom. 1:18 For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven **against all** ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who **by** their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**.

The Gentiles are Guilty

B. False Securities of Legalism

The Jews are Guilty (Rom 2:1- 3:8)

Ro 2:1 Therefore **you have no excuse**, O man, every one of you who **judges**.

The Whole World is Guilty (Rom 3:9-20)

10 as it is written:

“**None** is **righteous**, no, **not one**;

12 **All** have **turned aside**; together they have **become worthless**; no one **does good**,
not even one.”

19 ..., **so that every mouth may be stopped**, and **the whole world** may be held **accountable*** to God.

20 For **by works of the law no human being will be justified** in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

*in a court of law; liable to judgment

C. But NOW! – Righteousness of God Manifested

Rom. 3:21 But now the **righteousness of God** has been *manifested apart from the law*, ...²² **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ**....²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the **glory of God**,²⁴ and are **justified** by **his grace** as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus. [slide 2]

All who sinned may be JUSTIFIED through faith!

Rom. 3:27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. ... by the law of faith.

III. Understanding Abraham (Rom 4:1-22)

Revered by Jews Significant in Salvation History

A. What Shall We Say? No Boasting. Faith COUNTED AS Righteousness (Rom 4:1-3)

Rom 4:1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was **counted to** him **as** righteousness.”

Accounted a STATUS that did not belong to him.

Gen 15:6 And he believed the Lord, and he **counted it** to him **as** righteousness. [slide 3]

B. Paul's Logic

Romans 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who **justifies the ungodly**, his faith is counted as righteousness,

The **logic** of verses 4–5 can be unpacked his logic in a slightly different arrangement of his argument:

1. When we “work,” an employer pays us not “as a gift” but “as an obligation” (v. 4).

2. God is a God of grace, who gives freely and without constraint; he can never be “obligated” to any person (**the assumed premise**).
3. Therefore, God cannot “credit” human beings anything on the basis of their “works,” but will on basis of “faith.” (v. 5)

OBJECTION:

Justifying the wicked may seem unfair. See Rom 3:23

Justification does not transform us MORALLY, but changes our STATUS. Then why should we try? See Rom 6

God wonderfully REGENERATES, gives us the Holy Spirit and the Word to SANCTIFY.

This results in **overwhelming sense of amazement at what God has done for us, an amazement that immediately spills over into worship.**

We sing of “amazing grace,” “amazing love”—and truly it is amazing that the almighty and all-holy God would give us, people who live sinfully in rebellion against him, a new status of righteousness, **completely free of charge.**

C. Confirmation & MAKARIOS (the joy of gods, abundant life)

Romans 4:6 just as David also speaks of **the blessing** of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: **[slide 4]**

7 “**Blessed** are **those** whose **lawless deeds** are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

8 **blessed** is **the man** against whom the Lord will not count his sin.” (Ps 32:1-2)

D. Faith (apart from Ceremony) Makes Abraham Father of All Who Believe

Rom 4:9 Is **this blessing** then only for the **circumcised**, or also for the **uncircumcised**? For we say that faith was **counted** to Abraham **as righteousness**. 10 **How** then was it counted to him? Was it **before** or **after** he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the **sign** of circumcision as a **seal** of the righteousness that he had

by faith while he was still uncircumcised. **The purpose** was to make him the **father of all who believe** without being circumcised, so that **righteousness** would be **counted to them as well**, 12 and to make him the **father of the circumcised** who are not merely circumcised but **who also walk in the footsteps of the faith** that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

The PURPOSE of the 29 year interlude between Gen 15 and Gen 17.

E. The Promise Realized (Faith APART from Mosaic Law)

Rom 4: 13 For the **promise** to Abraham and his offspring that he would be **heir of the world** did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. **14** For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, **faith is null** and the **promise is void**. **15** For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 That is why it *depends on faith*, in order that the **promise** may **rest on grace** and be **guaranteed** to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the **father of us all**, **17** as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

13. Heir of the WORLD. Descendants carriers of the blessing. The Nations to be recipients. Those who believe NOW INCLUDED.

15. The Law brings wrath. **Rom 3:20** ...through the law comes **knowledge of sin**. **Rom 5:20** Now the law came in to **increase the trespass**, but where sin increased, **grace abounded** all the more,

17. The GOD in whom Abraham believed

GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD

CALLS INTO EXISTENCE THE THINGS THAT DO NOT EXIST

F. Character of Faith & Conclusion of Argument

Rom 4:18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." **19** He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. **20** No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, **21** fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. **22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."**

Faith doesn't close it's eyes to reality.

Not limited by the best human estimates of what is possible — For God "gives life to the dead" and calls into existence things that don't exist.

When he had not grounds for hope in himself, he had hope in God's promise.

We are able to hear God's YES when all the world above and below shouts out NO.

IV. Applying Abraham (Rom 4:23-25)

Rom 4:23 But the words "*it was counted to him*" were **not** written **for his sake alone**, **24** but **for ours also**. It will be **counted to us** who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, **25** who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

It is for our sake also! Believe in him who RAISED JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD.

Delivered up for our transgressions

Raised for our JUSTIFICATION

FREE FROM PUBLIC OPINION — "Daft Albert" Welsh Revival"

V. Celebration of RESURRECTION!

Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness.

Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free.

He that was taken by death has annihilated it!

He descended into hades and took hades captive!

He embittered it when it tasted his flesh!

It was embittered, for it was abolished!

It was embittered, for it was mocked!

It was embittered, for it was purged!

It was embittered, for it was despoiled!

It was embittered, for it was bound in chains!

It took a body and, face to face, met God!

It took earth and encountered heaven!

It took what it saw but crumbled before what it had not seen!

"O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory?"

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown!

Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is risen, and life reigns!

Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb!

For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-fruits of them that slept.

To him be glory and might unto ages of ages. Amen.