

Pastor Jake Magee

Message Notes

April 28, 2024 | Romans 4:1-5



Saving Faith

¹What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness."

What it means to *really* believe?

What we're supposed to *really* believe?

Small Group Questions

Getting Started

1. What person comes to mind (that you know personally) when you think of *faith*?

Digging Deeper Read *Romans 4:1-5*

2. Given our study of Romans 2&3, why would Paul use Abraham as an example of justification by faith alone?
3. Who was Abraham? As a group, come up with a biographical sketch of his life and importance.
4. Pastor Jake said Abraham was a Christian. What are some passages that teach this (e.g., Galatians 3:6-29; Romans 4!)? What are some questions this raises for you?
5. In verse 3, Paul quotes Genesis 15 and the moment Abraham was “credited righteousness.”
 - a) Look up the word for “credit.” What does it mean?
 - b) How is that term like and unlike the word “justified”?
 - c) Where does Paul say they mean the same things in chapter 4?
6. Abraham is “justified” or “credited righteousness” about 10 years *after* he obeys God’s initial call in Genesis 12.
 - a) Review some of the things Abraham did by faith in chapters 12-14.
 - b) Abraham had faith, but not the kind of faith *that justifies*. How might Abraham’s faith up to Genesis 15 be like a lot of non-Christian’s faith?
7. What transforms Abraham’s faith *into saving faith* in Genesis 15 has something to do with how he views the efforts of his life. Romans 4:4 seems to capture Abraham’s outlook of those efforts up to Genesis 15. Verse 5 seems to capture his outlook after. What was different?

8. Paul suggests that whereas Abraham was working up to Genesis 15, afterwards he wasn't.

a) Why can't "works" here mean things like *obedience, doing great or hard things for God, honoring God*, etc.?

b) What then do "works" mean? Look carefully at verse 4 for the answer. See also Hebrews 4:1-3; 9-11.

9. Because of sin, most (if not all) human achievements, efforts, relationships, etc.... can devolve into "works." Spend time listing the various good human endeavors God calls us into. Then talk about the ways they can devolve into "works" with God and the people in our lives?

10. On Sunday, Pastor Jake said the events recorded just before and after Abraham's salvation might have pointed Abraham to how Christ would justify him. What were those events? How might they point to Jesus?

Resources

Romans: *Righteousness from Heaven* | R. Kent Hughes.

www.blueletterbible.org

www.preceptaustin.org