

Romans

Romans 3:21-25a

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 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, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

Recap of Romans 4:1-12

1. Abraham's faith was counted to him as righteousness: WHEN & WHY
2. David tells us what grace is about
3. God justifies the ungodly

Romans 4:2-3

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.”

Romans 4:9-11a

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

Romans 4:6-8

just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

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.”

Romans 4:5

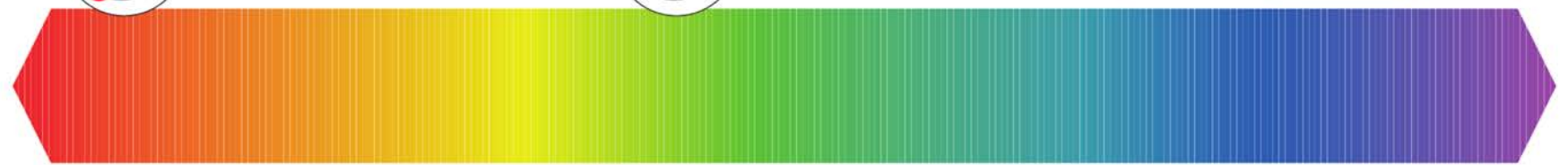
And to the one who does not work but believes in him
who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as
righteousness

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The Big Idea:

We are always trying to get right by finding homeostasis, peace, or an assurance that it will be okay, that ultimately we are okay, and that things are going to work out. We tend to look for this security – *present feelings of “rightness” and future hope* – in a myriad of ways, some helpful and some harmful. Romans 4:13-25 exists to show us that there is one, counterintuitive way to lay hold of an unflinchingly certain future – and present. The receiving of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ opens a doorway into a joyful present and a hopeful future that isn't defined by ourselves or our circumstances, but by our Savior.

This Week's Sermon

“Always Saved by Grace Through Faith”

Romans 4:13-25

Romans 4:13-25

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.

Romans 4:13-25

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.

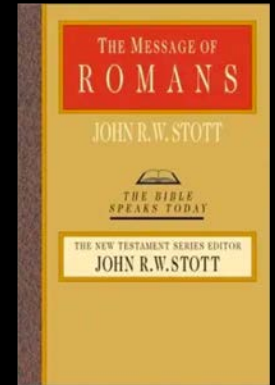
Galatians 3:7-9

7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. 8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Galatians 3:10-14

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

“Law and promise belong to different categories of thought, which are incompatible. Law-language (‘you shall’) demands our obedience, but promise-language (‘I will’) demands our faith. What God said to Abraham was not ‘Obey this law and I will bless you’, but ‘I will bless you; believe my promise’”



-John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 131.

Romans 4:13-25

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.

Romans 4:13-25

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.”

“Waver here is *diakrino*, which means to act as a judge, to pass judgement, to decide or determine. The point is that he did not allow unbelief to put him in a judgment mode where, like a trial judge or jury, he would weigh the evidence and make his decision. “What are the chances of God pulling this promise off?” a judge might ask. “Let’s examine the evidence.”That is exactly what Abraham did not do – turn into a judge who critiques at the human level the possibilities of God succeeding in doing what he promised.

-Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*, vol. 6, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 136–137.

Romans 4:13-25

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.

Why Always By Grace Through Faith?

1. Only faith levels the playing field
 - a. The Uniqueness of Grace
2. Only faith creates certainty
3. The only object of our faith

Only Faith Levels the Playing Field

Romans 3:27-30

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. 28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.



“Why did God choose faith as the means by which we receive justification? It is apparently because faith is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in faith we essentially say, “I give up! I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer. I know that I can never make myself righteous before God. Therefore, Jesus, I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God.” In this way, faith is the exact opposite of trusting in ourselves, and therefore it is the attitude that perfectly fits salvation that depends not at all on our own merit but entirely on God’s free gift of grace.”

The Promise Rests on Grace

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.

The Uniqueness of Grace



“The gospel makes Christianity unique among all other religions, and philosophical systems of enlightenment, approval, or success because while every other system primarily teaches things to do, only Christianity primarily teaches that the things to do are done. Outside of Christianity, both religious and irreligious systems aimed at personal success or fulfillment hold out for their adherents a certain goal - heaven, nirvana, reincarnation, enlightenment, happiness, and so forth - and then list out a set of steps or instructions to reach that goal.”

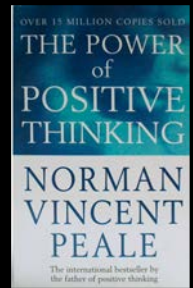
-Jared C. Wilson, *Unparalleled: The Uniqueness of Grace*, p. 180

Only Faith Creates Certainty

Romans 4:20-22

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.”

“BELIEVE IN YOURSELF! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy. But with sound self-confidence you can succeed. A sense of inferiority and inadequacy interferes with the attainment of your hopes, but self-confidence leads to self-realization and successful achievement.”



-Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking



Romans 4:18-21

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.

The Only Object of Our Faith

“It is not the strength of your faith but the object of your faith that actually saves you. Strong faith in a weak branch is fatally inferior to weak faith in a strong branch.”



-Tim Keller, “The Reason for God”

Romans 4:13-25

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.

Hebrews 11:17-19

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

Romans 4:5

And to the one who does not work but believes in him
who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as
righteousness



John 19:30

“It is finished” - Jesus

Revelation 22:7

“And behold, I am coming soon.” - Jesus

Gospel Response

Is your faith in Christ today?

Remember the promises Jesus makes to us:

“It is finished.”

“Behold, I am coming soon.”