

Salvation by Faith Alone - Romans 4

December 14, 2017

In Review:

JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
legal	literal
external	internal
Once and for all	Progressive and ongoing
Received by faith alone	Requires a whole-hearted pursuit of God and our surrendered cooperation with the Holy Spirit
<i>The principles of justification and sanctification can appear to be contradictory, but it is the healthy balance of truth where they don't oppose but actually strengthen one another.</i>	

Romans 3 - Man's Depravity is the reason God's justification is needed.

Depravity Defined

Romans 3:9-12 ESV

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,
10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;
11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.
12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

"...by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil." Proverbs 16:6 ESV

Depravity Expressed

Romans 3:13-18 ESV

13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips."
14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."
15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;
16 in their paths are ruin and misery,
17 and the way of peace they have not known."
18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Man's depravity is the reason God's justification is needed.

- *Man is utterly helpless to stop his sin, to cleanse his heart or his actions, or to be in right relationship with a holy God.*
- *Unregenerate man has unbridled depravity; there are no limits to the evil he is capable of committing.*
- *Man, without God's intervention, is damned to the eternal torment of eternal judgment and death (separation from God).*

Romans 4 - Righteousness (*being right with God*) is only possible by faith, not by works .

- **Faith**

Complete trust and exclusive reliance in the finished, all-sufficient redemptive work of Jesus Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the grave.

- **Works**

The self-discipline of a self-righteousness where being right with God is earned or deserved by obeying the Law.

Romans 4 - Salvation by faith alone.

Our righteousness before God depends on our belief that God not only forgives us but forgives us freely, without any:

- *condition - "you have to achieve this first"*
- *obligation - "you owe me"*
- *merit - "you deserve it"*

Romans 4:1-8 ESV

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.**"

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,**

6 **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.**"

Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,**

9 **not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

Romans 4 - We can add nothing (not one thing) to our salvation by faith.

"Maybe if I added to my faith some extra good works, circumcision, observance of Jewish traditions, gifts to the poor, extra hours in prayer, demonstrative weeping and wailing in repentance, asceticism, volunteering at the church:

- *I would be more spiritual and further along than others?"*
- *it would be easier for God to forgive me?"*

- *I might win some extra favor with God?"*
- *God would see that I deserve to be forgiven?"*
- *I'm not trying to replace faith in Jesus Christ, just trying to earn extra credit?"*

As those who seek sanctification and holiness, we must guard against the pride of thinking, "Because I do this or don't do that, I am a better Christian than others and more favored with God." From the "carnal Christian" to the "godly Christian", we all enter God's presence the same way, through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We are no different.

Acts 15:1-11 ESV

1 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.

4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.

5 But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."

6 The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us,

9 and he made no distinction (*diakrinō - to discriminate or prefer*) between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

10 Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

11 But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Romans 4:9-16 ESV

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,

Like circumcision for Abraham, the outward sign of our righteousness by faith is our good works by Christ living in us. But the good works are the result following, not the requirement before.

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.

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.

The law is only for those who choose to live and try to conduct themselves in the flesh. But if we choose to live by faith in Jesus Christ, there is no law to condemn us! God does not see us through the law but through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, therefore He sees no transgression, He sees no condemnation.

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.

Galatians 5:1-6 ESV

1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.

3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

My faith working in and through God's love in which He has lavished His grace upon me.

Romans 4 - Why is salvation by faith alone so hard to believe?

Romans 4:17-25 ESV

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.

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."

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 is salvation by faith so hard to believe that it is likened to Abraham receiving Isaac?

1. **The Impossible**

"For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight..." Romans 3:20 ESV

2. **Pride**

The inability to see and admit our need - "If something is broken, I can fix it, I don't need charity!"

3. **Guilt**

"My sin is too great to be forgiven. God is angry with me and has forsaken me."

4. **Misunderstanding Faith**

The error of thinking that faith is something I must muster or generate within myself.