

Romans 4:9~12

For 3 ½ chapters, we have been looking at the matter of *Man's Justification before God*... Paul has been describing “**Who it is**” and “**How it is**” that a man is “*Made Right with God*...” A good title for this study... “*Saving Faith*...”

There are a lot of different “*beliefs*” out there... And in our society, regardless of what you believe, you can likely find a church or organization that supports it. But just because someone “*believes*” something to be true, doesn't make it so... It does not mean that the faith they possess is “*Saving Faith*...”

In 1:16... Paul declares the “**Source**” of “**Saving Faith**”... ¹⁶*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

¹⁷*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

From 1:18 on, Paul explains “**Saving Faith**,” what he calls... “**The Gospel of Christ**...” Beloved, mark this... According to the scripture... There is “**NO OTHER**” means of justification, than that which is found in the “*Gospel of Christ*...”

Chapter 3, Paul lays down some of the most profound and weighty doctrines in all of scripture!

- a) The “*Role of the Jewish people*” in God's plan...
- b) The “*Total Depravity*” of all of mankind...
- c) The “*Purpose and Place of the Law of Moses*”...

And beginning in verse 21, Paul reveals what he calls in other epistles... “*The Mysteries of Christ*...” That which was hidden before time, but now revealed... From 21~31, Paul reveals the “*inner workings*” of God's masterful plan of salvation!

Without a doubt, the most mind boggling, theological piece of literature found anywhere in scripture! Incredible truths...

Now, here in chapter 4, Paul points to two of Israel's most honored and respected men of the Jewish faith, Abraham & David... as Illustrations, as Examples of the truth he has just declared.

And in looking at their lives, Paul draws out 3 aspects of “*Saving Faith*”... 3 aspects that the BIBLE declares to be the means of man's justification!

According to the “**Gospel of Christ**”, Man is:

- 1) **Justified By FAITH**...not WORKS...
- 2) **Saved By GRACE**...not LAW...
- 3) **By DIVINE POWER**...not HUMAN EFFORT...

(Vs 1~3) Paul has shown, that Abraham was “*Justified*” by FAITH...not...WORKS! And he does so, by pointing to the scripture...Genesis 15.(Vs 3) Abraham “*Believed God*...”

(Vs 4~8) Paul has shown, that King David was “*Justified*” by GRACE...not...LAW! And once again, he does so, by pointing to the scripture...quoting Psalms 32.

What I find so amazing, is the “*Contrast*” between these two men... By using Abraham & David, by looking at the scripture Paul uses for each man, we see they were opposites...

The picture we see of Abraham is that of complete submission to God... God promised him that he'd be the Father of many nations. And even though he was way up in his years, and it seemed impossible, Abraham still believed God. The picture is that of strong, unwavering FAITH....

But with David, we see a *much different picture*... David is not quiet the example as that of Abraham is he? Knowing the details of David's great fall, his adulterous affair with Bath-Sheba, the pregnancy, the deception, the murder, and all the cover up...

★ Knowing all that... King David's not a *very good example*, is he?

Or is he... When you think about... **He might well be a "better example" than Abraham!**

★ Though he's not the best example of "*Integrity*" and "*Faithfulness*..."
He is a "*good example*" of GOD'S GRACE!

We see here, that in using King David, Paul's point is made "*Crystal Clear*..."
That a man **is not** Justified by "*his good deeds*," ...but by the Grace of God!

No one could say, that David "Deserved" or "Earned" Justification...

By pointing to David, it is obvious that Justification comes on the basis of man's merit!

And that really "*Sets-up*" the question that Paul ask in verse 9...

(Vs 9) ⁹*Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or on the uncircumcision also?

Who are the "*Recipients*" of such "*Goodness*"?

Who is it that is able to "*receive and enjoy such Grace & Mercy*" from God?

By using Abraham & David, Paul has clearly "*set aside*" the law as the means of Justification!

There's not a person on earth, there's no Jew, who could argue that King David was declared "*just*" before God, on the basis of "his works," by his adherence to the Law of Moses... David has miserably failed! The only way to explain David's justification was solely by the Grace of God... Which David testifies to in Psalms 32...

But there is one thing, **they could point too still**...and that is *circumcision*. A "*Custom*" introduced first to Abraham, that involved the "*cutting away*" of the foreskin of the male. The bible tells us, that God instituted this custom, for a "*Sign*" of the covenant between Abraham and Himself... Throughout every generation, from that of Abraham's till the generation of Christ...Circumcision "*Identified*" them with "*father Abraham*..." "*God's Chosen People*..." "*Abraham's Children*..." They were called...

To really understand how serious the "*matter of circumcision*" was, in biblical times, there were only two classes of people in the world... ***Jews & Gentiles*... Circumcision & Uncircumcision...**

"No circumcised man will enter the gates of hates..."

"Abraham sits at the gate's of hates, to making sure no circumcised man will enter..."

And the opposite was said on the uncircumcision...that they'd never enter the gates of heaven...

Paul knew, that his audience would argue, that God showed "*Mercy & Grace*" to King David, because he was a Jew, one of the "*Covenant People*..." marked by "*Circumcision*..."

They'd argue, that David, received this "*blessedness*" by being a circumcised man...

Knowing this...Paul ask the question...

(Vs 9) ⁹ *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or on the uncircumcision also? What's going to be their answer? "*Circumcision Only!*"

Knowing that would be their answer... Paul points once again to the example of Abraham...

(Vs 9b) ...*for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.* ¹⁰ *How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?*

In Genesis 17, we find the record of Abraham's circumcision...

(Genesis 17) Abraham & Ishmael Circumcised... ²⁴ And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. ²⁷ And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

Abraham was 99 years old... and according to the account, Ishmael, his son was 13 years old, and he too was circumcised the same day...

The important thing about this, is the fact that according to this account, it had been "*at least 14 years*" after Abraham was declared righteous by God...

It was back in Genesis 15, that Paul made reference to in Romans 4:3, where it says, "*And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*"

According to scripture, God had declared Abraham "*Righteous*" **14 years prior** to his circumcision!

In other words...

Circumcision had absolutely nothing to do with Abraham's Justification!

Abraham was justified "*Without Circumcision*" by "*Grace, through Faith*" alone...

We may hear this and think very little, seeing we've never really dealt with this issue here... Well, not completely true... In our society, and day we live, we do not deal with the issue of "*Circumcision...*" But we do deal with a very similar issues... the man one being **Baptism**.

- 1) The Roman Catholic Church practices *infant baptism*...
- 2) The Christian Church teaches you must believe on Christ, and *be baptized!*

They hold to baptism much like the Jews hold to circumcision... Man's justification has always come by the same means... FAITH ALONE! A very familiar argument that many have with the teachings of the Christian Church, is the "*Thief on the Cross...*" Many will argue, he wasn't baptized! There's no way they can argue his salvation... Jesus made it clear! Thus, they explain him not being baptized in that he was saved under the O.T. Covenant!

I have one question... How was men/women saved under the O.T. Covenant? **Faith...**
How was men/women saved under the N.T. Covenant? **Faith...**

The thief was saved that day without being "*circumcised*" or "*baptized*" because he believed in Christ, and it was "**Imputed**" unto him for righteousness!

Baptism... Like Circumcision has absolutely nothing to do with justification before God... As a matter of fact, this passage "does away" with any custom or religious rite, or ceremony to aid us in our justification with God... That comes only by grace through faith...

So if that's the case...then that brings up a question... **Why "Circumcision?"**
If it has "*Nothing to do with man's justification...*" then why did God have it instituted?

Paul says, that Abraham received circumcision, as "***a Sign!***"

(Vs 11a) ^{11a} And he received the sign of circumcision,

What is a "*Sign?*" A sign is simply something that points to a "*Reality!*"

If your traveling south on I-75, coming from Lexington, you'll see a sign that says...

(Irvine Exit 90A) Now, you would not climb up on that sign, and say, you are IN IRVINE! A sign is just that, a sign that "points" to a "*Reality!*"

(Vs 11a) ^{11a} And he received the sign of circumcision, no doubt, a reference to Genesis 17...

(Genesis 17) ¹⁰This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. ¹²And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed.

Abraham received circumcision as the "*Mark*" of being God's man...

God having Abraham circumcised, acted as a "*Sign*" that pointed to the fact, **that Abraham** was one who was right with God!

Abraham's *circumcision* was God's "*Stamp of Approval*", "*a Seal*" of the "*Righteousness of Faith...*" It declared Abraham to be a Righteous man...

How was he righteous? **BY FAITH!**

(Vs 11b~12) Abraham became a "*Role Model*" as it were... For all peoples of the earth to look to, to see **how to be right with God!**

The most interesting thing about the issue of circumcision, is what it was a "*Sign of...*"

What did the sign of Circumcision "*Point Too?*"

The Cross... The removal of the flesh, the body of sin...

(Colossians 2) ¹¹In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision **made without hands**, in **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:**

²Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. ¹³And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; ¹⁴Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.