

## **2011 SERMON: ROMANS#4 FAITHFUL IN BELIEF**

### **Romans 4:1-8,16-25**

There is a lot of interest in genealogy today,  
And people want to know where they came from IN THEIR FAMILY TREE.  
They even write Dear Abby.

Dear Abby,

I have always wanted to have my family history traced, but I can't afford to spend a lot of money to do it, any suggestions?

Abby responds:

Run for Public office.

Do you know who your relatives were 4 generations ago?  
Who was great, great uncle George and great great aunt Erma?  
It can create a lot of questions for us.  
As to where we came from and who got us where we are today.

I like the little boy in Sunday school who asked a question that has perplexed him for some time.  
"Mr. Goodbe, said little Joey, "there's something I can't figure out. According to the Bible, the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, right?"

"Right." "And the Children of Israel beat up the Philistines, right?"

"Er, right." "And the Children of Israel built the Temple, fought the Egyptians, right?"

"and the Children of Israel were always doing something important?"

"All that is right, too," agreed Mr. Goodbe.

"So what's your question, Joey?"

"What were all the grown-ups doing?"

In Romans 4 the Apostle Paul starts off  
by telling us what one grownup was doing,.

**"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."Romans 4:3**

Today Abraham is held in high esteem by Jews, Muslims and Christians.

The Jews considered Abraham their greatest treasure,  
almost worthy of their worship.

They guarded the phrase:

"Our father Abraham"

In fact they wouldn't allow a circumcised Gentile convert

To refer to Abraham as "our father" even in the synagogue.

A Gentile convert had to call Abraham "your father"

That would be like someone who just became a Christian having to say:

I trust in your Jesus.

Not my Jesus.

Paul wanted to shut the lid on this kind of thinking and the law.

We are not saved by works of the law,

But by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Which occurred first with Abraham.

**What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? Romans 4:1**  
**What Abraham discovered is that he was:**

## I. JUSTIFIED BY FAITH NOT WORKS

Paul's witness to this fact is Abraham himself.

**If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about--but not before God. Romans 4:2**

When everything around him seemed to be moving away from God.

Abraham moved toward God

His faith in God declared him righteous.

Every farmer knows this principle in seedtime and harvest.

You do all you can,

And then you trust God with all you can.

Because if God doesn't intervene in the growing process.

SLIDE---You have no crops.

Just ask the drought plague Texans this year.

A few years ago, the Associated Press released a study done by an agricultural school in Iowa.

SLIDE---That in addition to the farmers labor, the production of 100 bushels of corn from one acre of land

required 4,000,000 pounds of water,

6,800 pounds of oxygen,

5,200 pounds of carbon,

160 pounds of nitrogen,

125 pounds of potassium,

75 pounds of yellow sulfur and other elements.

But, critical to all that was

rain and sunshine at the right time.

only 5 per cent of the produce of a farm

can be attributed to man's efforts.

Farming is a profession of faith.

Abraham discovered there comes a time in all of our lives.

When we realize that our own abilities, works, and efforts

Will not make it.

And we need to reach out

Not to another human being,

SLIDE---But to the living God.

**"I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalms 121:1-2 NIV)**

What does the scripture say about Abraham.

**SLIDE---Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Romans 4:3**

Credited is also translated-- Counted.

Greek banking term: "to put into one's account".

The word is used 11 times in this chapter

Sometimes translated as reckoned or imputed: (Romans 4:4,6,8, 9-10,11,21,24)

When a man earns a salary his money is put to his account.

We all are familiar with **direct deposit**.

We like it here at the church as well.

Because it is immediate- now- happens today.

I remember a few years ago when it would take at least

Three days for a check to clear.  
 We didn't have to say hold that check.  
 It was automatically held because of the inconvenience of mail, or deposit.  
 Today when you go to A Supermarket.  
 They just run the check through their machine and then  
 You get the check back in the same transaction.  
 Debit cards and credit card money is cleared from our account  
 Almost before you have signed the 'machine.

**"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Romans 4:3**

Faith opens our account with God immediately.

That is exactly what the thief on the cross understood.

SLIDE---When he said: **Remember me when you come into your kingdom.**

**Jesus said: Today you shall be with me in paradise.**

His salvation account was opened:

It was immediate,

It is continuous

It is secure- not one can tamper with it.

There is no **identity theft** when it comes to your name from the book of life.

God treat your account in heaven just like he would Jesus account.

**Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." Romans 4:8**

However, if we do not have faith and believe in Jesus Christ,

We do not open our account in Heaven

You will be treated just like we deserve to be treated

Insufficient funds.

And the check will be returned.

And we will be sent away to Hell.

And I'm Sorry for that,

But, it doesn't have to be that way. Abraham was

## **II. JUSTIFIED BY GRACE NOT THE LAW**

**13It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. Romans 4:13**

No matter what we do in this world,  
 we are always judged by what we did last.  
 Either good or bad we will get a reward.

Most of us feel like a little boy at a Children's hospital. He had gained a reputation for wreaking havoc with the nurses and staff. One day a visitor who knew about his terrorizing nature made him a deal: "If you are good for a week," she said, "I'll give you a dollar when I come again." A week later she stood before his bed. She said: "I'll tell you what, I won't ask the nurses if you behaved. You must tell me yourself. Do you deserve the dollar?" After a moment's pause, a small voice from under the sheets said: "Gimme a quarter."

Ask the Vikings football coach and he will tell you  
 that no player is any better than his last game!  
 That is why works won't work.

The Viking have to do better in their second half.  
 We have to do better than last weeks' game,  
 And the game before and more and more  
 Until you come to the end of what you can do.  
 Then when you can't do anymore, what then?  
 You still loose.

God is not impressed with our works or mine.  
 God is only impressed with our faith.

**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Hebrews 11:1-2**

Faith is the only thing that will save the human soul  
 Abraham was justified by faith and not the law;

**13It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. Romans 4:13**

Now Abraham sin was not in breaking the law.

**And where there is no law there is no transgression. Romans 4:15**

There was no law.

It was in breaking trust with God.

It was the identical sin of Adam.

Today it is still the root sin of our lives.

Not that we break laws, rules, or rituals,

But our denying God's love, his sacrifice, and

his purpose in the commands that he gives.

We all know that we still covet, steal, lie, commit adultery, curse God, and forsake his Sabbath.

In the law we are lost.

Sin and guilt cling to us like a shadow,

Think about this handkerchief being God's grace.

My right hand, under the cloth represents Jesus in His righteousness.

My left hand is uncovered.

It represents all my sins.

That is how God sees me before I am saved.

However, when I place my faith in Jesus,

I am placed into Christ (move left hand under the handkerchief)

and I am no longer seen.

All that is seen is the righteousness of Jesus!

Look at the results:

1. Sins Are Forgiven - The word means "sent away"

Your sin are removed from your lives. (Ill. Psa. 103:12; Isa. 38:17; 43:25; Jer. 50:20; Micah 7:19; Col. 2:13-14; i John 1:7)

2. Sins Are Covered – by Christ's blood and means they can't be seen or uncovered.

**But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:5**

3. Sins Are Not Counted Against us –

Your sins have already been credited to His account.

**Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."Romans 4:8**

It is because we are justified by his grace.

### **III. JUSTIFIED BY HIS RESURRECTION POWER**

In order to teach this great lesson of faith.

Apostle Paul recalls one of the greatest miracles in the entire Bible.

the birth of Isaac.

**Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Romans 4:18**

What makes Isaac's birth so special?

Well, his daddy was 100 and his mother was 90 when he was born.

The Guinness Book of Records tells us that the oldest mother on record is one Ruth Alice Kistler, who gave birth to a daughter at the spry age of 57. There is one report of a woman named Ellen Ellis who was said to be 72 in 1776 when her child was born. However, compared to Sarah, these women look like teenagers!

Did you know that it was 25 years from the promise given to the promise received. Abraham has 25 years to doubt over this promise.

#### **1. V. 18 He Refused To Listen To Reason –**

Common reason said Abraham body and Sarah's womb was dead, it was impossible.

**Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Romans 4:19**

Just as impossible as it was for Abraham and Sarah to have a baby,

It was just an impossible for them to save themselves.

That is the point,

no physical act could provide a baby, or save themselves.

**Without weakening in his faith, Romans 4:19**

He refused to look at reason

#### **2. He Refused To Look At Reality –**

He kept his eyes off his situation

**Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, Romans 4:20**

Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see,

**This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." Romans 4:22**

These words were not only given to him,

But for each of us.

It does make a difference what you believe as a parent.

It does make a difference what you believe

About the atonement, the Resurrection,

The authority of the Scriptures,

Because it affect your view of God.

That affects your world view.

And your world view affects your family.

How you live in the world.

How you act in the world,  
 Your morality,  
 Your relationships,  
 Your salvation.

**Abraham did not waver... being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. Romans 4:21**

Can you trust God for your life?

Not many people enjoy going to the doctor, but according to Reuters, in 1994, one London accountant took that to an extreme. The 63-year-old man knew he needed bladder surgery but he could not overcome his fear of doctors and hospitals. So he self-reliantly did what had to be done: He tried to perform the surgery on himself. Tragically he got an infection from the self-surgery and later died. The coroner said, "Unfortunately, [his] drastic remedy went wrong. A simple operation would have solved the problem."

Romans 4 is saying that you can  
 no more do bladder surgery on yourself,  
 Than you can do a sin surgery on yourself.  
 We will end up destroy both body and soul.

Last two verses say: Abraham trusted God,  
 It was credited to him as righteousness,

**23The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone,  
 But it was not for him alone.**

**24but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Romans 4:23-24**

Can you with all the honesty that your heart possesses,  
 Say that you are trusting the Lord Jesus Christ alone  
 for your soul's salvation?  
 Abraham believed and was saved.