

Romans 4:1–4

We Can't Boast of Righteousness because It's Given by God, and Faith Is Not a Work

**Monday, November 14, 2022 ◻ Romans 4:1–5**

*Questions from the Scripture text: About whom does v1 now ask? What does it ask about his doing? According to what? What hypothetical accomplishment does v2 consider? What would Abraham have in that case? But not before Whom? About what does v3 now ask? What had Abraham done? And in what way did it become righteousness? What sort of person does v4 ask about? What aren't his wages? What, instead, is the nature of his wages?*

**Why can't we boast of the righteousness that is truly ours in Christ?** Romans 4:1–5 looks forward to the devotional in this week's midweek meeting. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **because the righteousness that is truly ours in Christ comes as an accounting of grace, rather than the repaying of debt, we know that our faith is not a work, and we have no room at all for boasting.**

**We get nothing from the flesh and everything by faith.** v1 begins with a rhetorical question where the answer is "nothing good!" The clue that makes it obvious is the phrase "according to the flesh." Abraham began as an idolater (cf. Josh 24:2) and nothing good comes from his or our flesh.

**Believers' works are not boast-worthy.** Men might have owed Abraham repayment for the good that he did them. Men might have rightly praised him as better in his conduct than they. From the perception of men, Abraham seemed to be justified by works (v2a).

But we do not live before men so much as we live before God. And there was no room for Abraham to boast there (v2b). We know that God did not owe Abraham anything because of the way Genesis 15:6 is worded. The quote in v3 is proof that Abraham's faith was not a work.

The apostle sets "accounting" over against rewarding or repaying. When righteousness is accounted as yours, it is just as much yours as in the earning case, but completely unearned. The mechanism of being "accounted" as righteous teaches us the nature of faith—that it is not at all a work.

And even the faith that a believer has was a gift. There is no room for boasting. Each of us needs to judge himself not by appearances but with right judgment (cf. Jn 7:24), sober judgment (Rom 12:3a), realizing that even our faith is a gift that was measured out to us (cf. Rom 12:3b; Eph 2:8–9).

**Righteousness is not a debt owed for work but a grace given by accounting.** Works are owed their wages. If we introduce any works at all into faith, we are saying that we have indebted God. Employers who treat wages as grace, rather than as debt, are robbers (cf. Lev 19:13; Deu 24:15; Jas 5:4). The wages are owed. But the Scripture is plain: Abraham's righteousness was accounted to him. It was grace.

If even Abraham was justified by faith alone apart from works, then how much less could we be justified by works? If even Abraham had nothing to boast about of, how could we have something to boast about?

**How (alone!) can you gain true righteousness? Why is it important that this is the only way?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving us faith, and for accounting us righteous in Christ by that faith. Grant that we would never boast but remember that our righteousness was a gift of grace in Jesus Christ, through whom we praise You and pray, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH433 "Amazing Grace"**

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Romans chapter 4 verses 1 through 4. These are God's words. What then shall we say that Abraham? Our father has found according to the flesh. For a favor him was justified by works. He has something to boast about But not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God. And it was accounted to him. For righteousness. Now to him, who works the wages are not counted.

That's grace. But as debt, So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent work. The apostle. Moves on now, through from Talking about boasting. Being excluded. He points out that Abraham's boasting was also excluded in the same way that this Being made right with God, only through faith. Is something that has always Bend the case.

And he reminds us that. Even. The most eminent saints. I have been in the flesh that they needed to be. Regenerated that they needed to be atoned for that. They needed to be justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

And the most. Revered.

The most revered. Father in the faith from the Old Testament, was Abraham. You remember, he is the one that especially the Pharisees trotted out. When they were in verbal jousting. With our Lord Jesus. And yet the apostle by the Spirit immediately reminds us that Abraham was in the flesh.

Just like Joshua. At the end of his book when he is talking to Israel about God's, great mercy to them reminds them that God was Was merciful to Tara and to Abraham. At first as well, in Genesis chapter 12 so in Joshua 24 verse 2, he reminds them that before God called Tara and Abraham out of err of the Chaldees.

That they were idolaters, that Abraham had begun as an idolater. And when therefore, when he asks us the question here, What shall we say, Abraham? Our father has found according to the flesh. The phrase according to the flesh. In implies nothing. Good. Nothing good comes From us, that is from our flesh.

As He's going to say about himself. In chapter 7. And then goes on to point out if Abraham was justified by works, He has something to boast about, but not before God. If he has, if he is justified by works, then he's done better than other people and They should be impressed with him and He would have something to boast about, although, He hasn't been justified by works.

And he doesn't have something to boast about, But even in that case, if he had been justified by works, God was the one who sustained him. God, is the one who defines. What good works are. God is the one who created all things. God is the one. Who would have upheld him?

He still wouldn't have. Any ground to boast before God. So there's the first reason. Even our faith is something that we get from God. So faith is not something to boast about because you get it from God. Now, supposing that faith was something we did. That. That other people don't do.

You would think that faith was something that you could say? Well, I can't boast about faith before God because he gave it to me but I can boast about my faith. By comparison to others, because at least I believed and they didn't Of course, we can't do that as we're about to hear.

In verses 3 and 4. But that is what the Armenian idea. Would lead to. The idea that Jesus has already died for. All centers equally and that the thing that makes a difference between sinners is one figures out to believe and makes the choice to believe. So we'd have something to boast about, Not before God, he's He upholds

us in all things, even faith.

You know, most Armenians today. At least you know, theologically minded Arminians. Holds to Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace which means that God graciously enables all people to be able to choose, but they're there are some people that God did that gracious work in. Who Do not end up being forgiven.

And do not end up coming to faith. But whatever version of the Armenian error, You have you'd say, well I have something to boast about So the first first reason faith can't boast is because God upholds us and everything we do and even if you were justified by works you couldn't boast before God.

The second reason is that faith is not a work. That's in verses 3 to 4 for what does Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him. For righteousness. So, believing the faith. Is the thing that God is responding to. With. This acknowledgment of Abraham's righteousness. But how does that happen?

Is it a decked? Or is that an accounting? It's a reckoning crediting. Now to him, who works verse 4, The wages are not counted as grace. But as that, And so, he's He's taking Genesis 15:6, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he's saying see that word there, accounted Means that faith is not a work Faith.

Didn't earn. The designation of righteousness. God didn't owe Abraham. Righteousness, for believing. He counted Abraham righteous As a gracious declaration. Through believing. So, faith is something that is not a work. It has a different nature. Now, they're saving faith is Now, there is in faith, the Exercise of the will, there are all.

Sorts of things involved, you? Faith and repentance go together and so, Faith is a faith that hates its sin. Faith is a faith. That sees that Jesus As glorious and good, and that he died for us, Faith. Does apprehend the mercy of God in Christ, and all of these things.

But all of those Aspects, all those things that faith does. Those are actually repentance. Faith itself. Is not working. Faith itself as a resting. On. The Lord alone what he has said. Who he is? What he has done. And so, He says, now to him who works. The wages are counted as a debt.

He's saying, if faith was a work Then it would indebt God it would when you believed God would owe you. For what you have done by believing. Faith. Does not a work saving faith. Is a gift from God, but it is a resting upon who God is. What God has said.

What God has done? Particularly in Christ Jesus. Therefore, We don't have something to boast about and not just not before God. We don't have something to boast about before anyone. And our justification. Why? Because we haven't done anything. In our justification. Faith, always comes with repentance. But repentance does not justify.

God justifies us only through the faith. It is the alone instrument, we should If you don't know that phrase, yet you've learned that phrase. Faith is the alone instrument. Of our justification.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we confess that you are the one who has given us our faith. And we confess that. You alone have saved us by your righteousness, by your power? By your atonement. By all that you have determined in yourself to do by what Christ has done.

And so we have no hope. But him. And we rejoice before you that he is a sure and perfect. And full hope. And everywhere. We thank you that with the faith, you have also given us works. That you have given us repentance hatred of our sin. Apprehension of your mercy in Jesus.

Desire to do better. Love for you. But Lord, these two are things. Not only that you have given but that have Proceeded from the faith that you have given us. And so we bless your name. For our salvation is from faith and for faith. By faith from start to finish.

We bless your name at all, we have Alone. And we ask that, you'd keep us. From being proud before you O God, which is a horror And keep us from being proud, but comparison to others, Since we have done nothing. For our justification. And even those things that we do, From our justification.

Are things that you continue to give by grace. Lord make us humble people. Make us thankful people. Where we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.