

True, Biblical Faith

Romans: Righteousness of God

By Dan Botterbrodt

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Foundation Baptist Church
2140 Hawthorne Avenue
Crete, Nebraska 68333

Website: www.sermonaudio.com/solo/ibi
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/ibi

Romans chapter 4 here this morning as we continue our journey through the book of Romans and I want to emphasize here today in relation to what we've been studying in this, the importance of faith. I want to also say that the imputed righteousness, as we'll study that out here, we'll hopefully get an understanding of that but imputed righteousness only comes by faith, not the works of the law, not by good works and so on. Romans chapter 4, notice verses 1 and following.

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [Notice it says,] 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also [Jews versus Gentiles]? 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? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised [be a Jew]; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Now, I've emphasized this from time to time but I had a man, and one in particular, come to me and he said a New Testament preacher should not be preaching from the Old Testament. Then tell Paul that. I mean, look at all of these Old Testament scriptures that Paul is emphasizing here in the book of Romans. We saw that in the book of Hebrews.

That is not a New Testament teaching. That is a teaching of heresy because we don't understand the Old Testament we lose track of what is being emphasized.

So let's look at Genesis chapter 15. I say that because we need to understand what the Old Testament says as we understand that the New Testament is an application of what was presented in the Old. The Old Testament types and all of that we see fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now Genesis chapter 15 is the passage that Paul is quoting from here. So Genesis chapter 15, notice verse 1 says, "After these things the word of the LORD," notice, "the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision." Now let me ask you, do you need a vision to hear somebody speak? Do you need to see that person to hear them? I believe this is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the word of the Lord, the word of God coming to Abram in a vision. Notice he says, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Now, I along with so many other preachers, preached, years ago I preached, that Abraham backslid on God when he went to Egypt in Genesis chapter 12. Now wait a minute, how can you backslide on God until you are a believer? Abraham was not a believer, declared righteous until Genesis chapter 15. So what about 12, 13, 14? He was a seeker at that point. God had presented the gospel to him and as I often say, how many of you were saved the very first time you heard the gospel? Most people are not saved the very first time. I grew up in church. I heard it from Sunday school teachers. I heard it from my parents. I heard it from my preacher. I was saved when I was seven, probably after I heard it dozens of times, seven years old. Here's the point, I want you to understand this: Abraham is not declared righteous, as we would say he's not saved until Genesis chapter 15.

It says in verse 2, "Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold," notice, "Behold, to me thou hast given no seed." So notice the Lord hasn't answered him yet. "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." Now, it's too bad Abram didn't remember this and decided, you know, I'm going to do things, you know, my way to answer the Lord's promise here. "and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir," neither Ishmael in the next chapter, "but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." Notice he, the word of the LORD, notice again, the word of the LORD came unto Abram, verse 1. He, the word of the LORD, verse 5, "brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Notice it says here in verse 6, "he believed in the LORD; and he counted it," he the Lord, "counted it to him for righteousness." He was not saved, he was not declared a believer until this point but it says he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Now that's important for us to see that passage because we understand the context which Paul emphasizes this in more than one case, in more than one place in the New Testament. Now as you think about, as you go back to Romans chapter 4, I want you to notice here first of all, we are declared righteous without works. Now we have here the example of Abraham. Abraham in verses 1 and following says, Abraham, I believe this is

talking about Abraham before the law was given, so we see here in Romans chapter 4 verse 1, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture?" So here's where Genesis 15 comes in. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God," notice, God, "and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This quote from Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 brings us the emphasis that it's believing God and not works.

I want you to hold your place and I want you to notice a couple other places here as far as glorying before God. It says here, first of all, Jeremiah chapter 9. This is actually the passage that is used, it's quoted from in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Jeremiah chapter 9, notice verses 23 and 24. "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches." All right, so what do we glory in? Who do we glory in? It says in verse 24, "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Again, the question is asked, for if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. A statement I should say is made.

Notice with me also Galatians chapter 6. Galatians chapter 6. Now, what I want to emphasize is, as far as this concept here, circumcision mentioned in this passage, don't just focus on that issue. I want you to consider that there are other things, baptism or whatever, people will replace with this, trusting in to be saved. I want you to notice here again, if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory but not before God. Notice it says here in Galatians chapter 6 verses 12 through 15, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." That's why they're doing this, they don't want to suffer for the cause of Christ, these professing Christians. It says in verse 13, "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law." So they're observing some ritual, but I want you to notice here, they're not obeying the law, "but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Here's what I want to emphasize: there are some who say that you have to be baptized in order to be saved. Here's the problem with that, we could say then, I'm baptized, instead of saying, God saved me. Notice the difference there. We're going to see the emphasis here that circumcision had no saving merit as far as Abraham. Baptism does not for us. Or we could say, I'm keeping the law. There are some who emphasize keeping the Sabbath day in order to be saved. Keeping the Sabbath will not save anyone. We can start having church on Saturday and nobody's going to be any more saved than you were before. So as we understand this whole concept here, we're talking about emphasizing some ritual, some thing that I do in order to be saved.

Notice with me also in Galatians chapter 3. Also notice with me verses 6 through 9. Galatians 3 verses 6 through 9. It says, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith," not some ritual of the Old Testament law, "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." I want you to notice it says God "preached the gospel unto Abraham," and he said to him, "In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Again, as you notice here in Romans chapter 4, it says very clearly, if Abraham were justified by works, he have whereof to glory, but not before God. Nobody is going to get to heaven and say, "Here's what I did to get to heaven." No one is going to do that because we're all going to have to depend, if we're going to be in heaven, if we're going to be in the New Jerusalem, we all have to be able to say that, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for me." Also, James chapter 2 verse 23 also emphasizes the same thing, this quote from Genesis 15:6.

This was a truth that Paul emphasized often in his writings as far as New Testament scripture. I want you to notice carefully Romans 4 verse 4. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." What are we talking about there? Working to pay off a debt. Now there's two different ways a debt could be paid. Somebody could come in and say, "I'll pay it for you. How much do you owe?" Woo hoo hoo! Hallelujah! Praise God. Or we could say, "I'm just going to keep working. I'm going to work. I'm going to work. I'm going to pay off this debt." Here's a relation to salvation, when he's talking about righteousness, imputed righteousness, as he's emphasizing this passage. Notice very clearly he says, it says in verse 4, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Working to pay off this debt.

Now as far as this work, I want to show you something here. This is a cross-reference that I never put with this passage before. Notice to me, Matthew chapter 19. Matthew chapter 19. Familiar parable, but I want you to notice something here and when I looked up this cross reference, I thought, wait a minute, what has this passage to do with this, but very clearly given in Matthew 20. But I want you to notice this setting here, why Jesus gives this parable. Matthew 19 verse 27, "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Again, this is one of the passages that caused me to question my teaching as far as dispensationalism. If the apostles are sitting on the twelve thrones of Israel, how are they also in the church? They obviously are the bridge between Old Testament and New Testament. That's why we see both the Israel tribes on the gates. And again, it's very clear if we just want to pay attention to this.

But notice it says in verse 29, "And every one," every one, "that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." So what have you

given up for the cause of Christ? Some of us have unsaved family members, and you don't have a close relationship with unsaved family members because you have something different, you have faith in Jesus Christ, they do not.

But here's what I want you to notice verse 30, "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." What's the first word in chapter 20? "For." This is a continued statement. Our chapter verse divisions are there for us to find things better, find easier if we remember the address as we call it. It says in chapter 20, "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto..." This is a continued statement of what he's answering here as far as this question that Peter asked in verse 27 of chapter 19.

Now notice this parable here. "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny." So the agreement was made between the laborers and the householder for a penny a day. Well, that doesn't sound like much. Can I remind you a penny a day was a common man's laborer payment in this day? Dave Boyd, wouldn't you love to be able to pay everybody a penny a day? A penny went a lot further than it does now. But again, this is a Roman coin, a particular Roman coin as far as this culture.

Notice he had agreed with them for a penny a day and he sent them into his vineyard. "And he went out," notice, "went out about the third hour," 9 o'clock a.m., "and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right," notice that, whatsoever is right. He's not doing wrong here. Notice "whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way." But notice there's no specific pay mentioned in verse 4. "Again he went out about the sixth hour," 12 o'clock noon, "and ninth hour," 3 o'clock in the afternoon, "and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour," so they only have one hour left, it's a 12 hour work day. "And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard," notice this, he says this again, "and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." No specific amount, but he says what is right, he does not say what is wrong. "So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny." So they received a day's wage for one hour. That's the emphasis here. "But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more," after all, they worked 12 hours, so they should receive 12 pennies, right, based on the first set of payments here. "And they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the," notice, "good man of the house." He's called the good man of the house, "saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them and said, Friend," notice he calls him a friend, "Friend, I do thee no wrong." Remember again, we saw twice, whatsoever is right I will give you. "I do thee no wrong, didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" You agreed, we had an agreement. "Take that thine is and go thy way. I will give unto this last even as unto thee.

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first." Notice this statement again. "So the last shall be first and the first last for many be called, but few chosen."

Now what's the emphasis? What is the emphasis of this parable? What was given was based on the goodness and grace of the householder. Did you notice that? Whatsoever is right. Notice the good man of the house. So what was given in this parable was equal because it's based on the grace and goodness of the Lord as we see in the application of this. It's not on how much work was done. That is the application of Romans 4 verses 1 through 5. Salvation is not based on how much I do otherwise I'm paying off a debt. That's what Romans 4 says. Jesus emphasizes his goodness and his grace. Can I remind you the application of this? We who were saved at the very end will receive just as much as Abraham and the twelve disciples and so on. Can you imagine? Abraham's the first one who was declared righteous according to the application of Romans 4. Abraham has been saved for thousands of years now. If Jesus Christ comes back very soon, guess what? We were saved at the very end. Guess what? We're going to receive the same grace, the same goodness as Abraham, the 12 disciples and so on.

God's grace is not dependent on work. As we go back to Romans 4, notice again, "Now to him that worketh is a reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Again, what we're emphasizing in this passage is it's all about God's grace and his goodness, not about how much I do in order to be saved, to be declared righteous. Verse 5, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly," notice, "his faith is counted for righteousness."

I want you to notice Romans chapter 5. We're going to be here next week. But as far as this believing and justifying the ungodly, notice what it says in verses 6 through 8. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the," notice, "ungodly." God does not wait for us to get cleaned up first before he will save us. Notice, it's for the ungodly. God knows what we're like, and he says, "I'm gonna save them anyway." If we but believe in his payment that is made on our behalf. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. If peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die." Die for a country, there's people who are willing to die for our country. But you think about this. "But God commandeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He doesn't wait for us to work and get cleaned up first. He says I must believe. I must believe and he's going to give us this imputed righteousness. That's the emphasis of this chapter.

It says then in verse 5, I should say, of Romans 4, it says, but his faith, his faith is counted for righteousness. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." All right, so now we have David under the Old Testament law. Abraham is before. I don't understand why people say, yeah, you've got to be saved by the law. Like Abraham was before the law. So how can Abraham be the example of being saved by the law? But David is under the law. So we see both of these examples here. Can I remind you that there is nothing that the Old Testament says that David could offer, that David could do to care for the sin of murder

and adultery? According to the Old Testament law, what was the demand? Death, be executed, stoned to death. There was nothing that David could say to God, "Okay God, I'm going to do this." No, he had to call on God's forgiveness. In fact, what's interesting, 2 Samuel 12, as Nathan is confronting David, it says, "God hath put away, the Lord hath put away thy sin." When David says, "I have sinned," that is when, I believe, the pardon took place, the forgiveness took place. That does not mean that he did not suffer the consequences of his sin. Consequences and forgiveness are two different things. But here's the emphasis, even as David also described it, the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.

Notice 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy chapter 1. 2 Timothy chapter 1 verses 9 and 10. And then verse 8 talks about the power of God, "who hath saved us and called us with unholy calling, not according to our works." Notice, not according to our works. Titus 3,:5, again, "not by works of righteousness which we have done. But according to his mercy he saved us." Notice, "but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to life through the gospel." Of course he says in verse 11, "whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles." Notice again, it's talking about here, verse 9 it says, he's called us with a holy calling not according to our works. There's not one work I can do to earn God's pardon. Not one thing I can do. That's why I emphasize, we saw last week, or two weeks ago, the emphasis on the obedience, repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. But again, David is given as an example here, the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputed righteousness without works. He quotes here from Psalm 32 verses 1 and 2. This is a Psalm after he experienced God's forgiveness saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Then today as we think about Psalm 51 various places, in fact I want you to notice Psalm 51 verses 16 and 17. This passage emphasizes that there was nothing that David could do in order to make things right with God as far as his murder and his adultery. Psalm 51 verses 16 and 17. "For thou desirest not sacrifice as I would give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering." There's no sacrifice for murder and adultery, as I said. The death penalty is what he deserved. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Isaiah 57:15 also refers to that. As we think about this broken and contrite spirit, he begs God for forgiveness, and it says the Lord imputed that to his account as he forgave him of his sin.

Look with me in Luke chapter 7. Luke chapter 7. Luke chapter 7 verse 36. "One of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him," Jesus eating with him in his house. "He went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat," and notice, "behold a woman in the city which was a sinner when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house," notice, "brought an alabaster box of ointment." Now, there's something that I think is interesting as far as oriental custom as far as this time of history. The door is often left open. An invitation was given to various individuals, but the door was often left open and so we see here that this woman entered in uninvited, essentially but nobody

said, "You can't come in if you don't have an invitation." So this is not like she's just stealing into the house. She's walking in through an open door that was left open there. And notice, "stood at his feet behind him weeping, began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment." Literally, she's praising and worshiping the Lord at his feet. It says here in verse 39, "Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself." Notice, within himself. Notice it's not the fact that he was displeased with her entering into the house. He's upset about how Jesus is responding to this sinner. "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner. Jesus answering and said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. He saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors. The one owed 500 pence and the other 50. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. He said unto him, thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon," notice he's looking at the woman, but speaking to Simon yet. "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil, didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven for she loved, she loved much, but whom little is forgiven the same loveth little. And he said unto her, thy sins are forgiven." Let me ask you, what all did she do for that forgiveness? The anointing, the washing of feet and so on, that was not for the forgiveness because I want you to notice what Jesus says about this. "And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Notice here Pharisees are not offering any hope for sinners. "And he said unto the woman, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." Notice it was her faith, not her washing his feet, not anointing his feet and all these things, notice her actions came about because of her faith. Notice again the emphasis on faith and not our works.

So go back to Romans chapter 4, I want you to notice also it says in verses 8 and following, I'm sorry, verse 9, "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only or upon the uncircumcision also?" Not only are we declared righteous without works, we're also declared righteous without religious rituals. Again, emphasis on baptism. There are many who believe they're going to be saved, have saving merit today because of observing the Mass. There are going to be many who think they're going to be having salvation because of observing seven sacraments. Those things do not save. Sabbath keeping, all of those things, none of those things will save. So as we think about this example given here of circumcision, I think the emphasis on this passage is the fact that Abraham was declared righteous before the right of circumcision was given to Abraham. So let me ask you, what comes first, Genesis 15:6 or Genesis 17? Here's Paul's point. It says he looked at the starry heaven. It says he believed the Lord and it was counted to him for righteousness. Then in chapter 17, he's told, is given the ritual of circumcision. So let me ask you, was he declared righteous before or after circumcision? So let me ask you, is somebody declared righteous before or after baptism? Before.

We notice two words here that are given here as far as this passage in relation to the circumcision that was given to Abraham. Notice verse 11, "he received the sign of circumcision and a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being uncircumcised." Notice sign and seal, not source of righteousness. Nothing, there was absolutely no righteousness that was imputed to Abraham's account because of practicing this circumcision ritual of the Old Testament. Abraham was declared righteous before circumcision was instituted. I want to use this as an example as far as baptism. If you think about the sign of circumcision, the seal of righteousness of the faith, if we think about the seal, it says, in fact, Ephesians 1, I'm sorry, my voice is struggling here today. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 13 and 14, talking about trusting in Christ, verse 12, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed," notice, "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory." Chapter 4, chapter 4, verse 30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." So we have the sign and the seal. Now let me just point this out as far as baptism. We practice immersion baptism as a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is why baptism is performed after profession of faith in Christ because that baptism has no saving merit. That's why Paul says, "I'm preaching the gospel. I'm not sent to baptize." But this is a public statement, a public testimony, a sign of what I believe. Notice this obedience, that's what it was called in Genesis 17, this obedience of Abraham on the part of God's ritual that he gave to him, all of that had no saving merit, but it was a sign and a seal as we see in verse 11.

I also think of the example of Acts 15, verses 1 through 5. If you think about the Jerusalem Council, there was a teaching that was going out of the church in Jerusalem and as these false teachers are coming out, they were saying you have to keep the Old Testament law in order to be saved. In particular, they're emphasizing the circumcision part. That'd be like us saying, you have to be baptized in order to be saved. That'd be like the church of Christ saying, it's not complete until you are baptized. I want you to consider that is adding a work then to faith. It says the Pharisees in Acts 15, the Pharisees that believed said you have to keep the Old Testament law in order to be saved. So again, there's a confusion as far as what is actually providing for the imputed righteousness.

As it says again in verse 12, "And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also," notice, "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Notice here the Gentiles who follow Abraham's faith. If we follow Abraham's faith, regardless of some Jewish ritual, we also can have just as much saving merit and imputed righteousness as the Jew who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice again, who walk, but walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. It says, for the promise. Notice the promise that he should be heir of the land of Palestine was not to Abraham. No, wait a minute. Why is it that we focus on a land in the Middle East? That is not what the Bible says. That is not what the Bible says. What does your Bible say? I misread that. I'm sorry, I misread it. Abraham has inherited the world. Do you realize Americans, American true

believers in Christ are part of his inheritance? I'm sorry, I don't live in Palestine. I don't live in Israel today. I'm just as much a part of this inheritance. Again, the father of many nations. Can I ask you, can all nations fit in Palestine? We have focused, we've misplaced the focus of what the emphasis is on the promise given to Abraham. What I think is very interesting is that in Hebrews 6 it says that he received the promise. Did he have the land yet then, before he died? Absolutely not. So what was the promise? That you'd be a father of many nations. See we focus on land, God's focusing on a spiritual blessing and spiritual inheritance. I'm going to read it the right way now, "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law but," notice, "through the righteousness of faith." Very clearly we see the emphasis here that he's going to be the father of many nations and Paul's even going to emphasize that and develop that in the next several verses.

Notice it was not given to Abraham or to his seed through the law, through keeping of the Old Testament law, but through the righteousness of faith. Again, I remind you, Abraham was declared righteous before the law was ever given. That's what the Bible even talks about in Galatians, the law which was 430 years after. Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith in what the Lord had said, believing in the Lord and his word. Notice it says here then in verse 14, "For if they which are of the law be heirs," notice, if, he's offering a conditional thing, "if they, which are the lobby heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of none effect." Let's bring it down to today. If baptism is absolutely essential for salvation, guess what? Faith is made void. That's what that's saying. If you have to do something, if there's some keeping of the law that you have to do, then you make faith void. It is worthless then. If I have to do something, that's why it's all about faith. That's what he's emphasizing here. Because the law worketh wrath. Here's why, here's why. Sorry, verse 14., "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise is made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." 1 John 3:4 says that sin is the transgression of the law. When we violate God's laws, guess what? We have transgressed his law. We are guilty before God and because of that, we'll face eternal death in the lake of fire. That's why he's offering here this pardon for sin based on imputed righteousness.

But it says, "the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Now, let me ask you, I don't know if you can be pulled over if you're going 20 miles an hour over the speed limit if it's not posted. But if there's a new area, let's just use this illustration, if there's a new housing area going up, and there's no speed limit signs posted so how fast can you go through there? Well, you have to pull out your driver's manual to find that out but here's what I want to point out: until a sign is posted, guess what? You don't know if you're breaking the law or not. So what's the purpose of the law? It is not to save us. I can't do enough in order to save myself. So what is the purpose of the law? It's to point out my sin because again, it says in verse 15, "the law worketh wrath." Guess what? Because I know that I violated God's law, guess what? I realize that I'm a sinner before God. I'm going to experience his wrath.

Verse 16, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." Well, that sounds like Ephesians 2:8, and 9. I want you to look this up here. So I was doing some reading for

another matter of study, came across a statement that is found in the New King James that I thought was very interesting. Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Do you realize that the modern Bibles alter that severely? Here's the New King James, "For by grace you have been saved through faith." Let me ask you, is salvation only past tense or is it present tense? Do you ever lose your salvation? If salvation is only, I have been saved by grace through faith, guess what? You've got a serious problem there. There's a reason why the true Bible points this out as, "by grace are ye, are ye saved." Present tense. It's always present. My salvation is always present. But it says we are saved through faith and that not out of yourselves. But what's very interesting is a lot of the Greek tools have it said this way, are being saved. That's why some of the modern Bibles say you are being saved. Now, so when do you finally reach that? According to that statement, when you've done enough works. When you've kept the law enough. How do we ever get to that point on our own?

Notice again the emphasis that Paul makes here. "By grace ye are saved through faith." That's why Paul says back in Romans 4, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." All right, I'll bring back the parable that we read a moment ago. Think about Matthew 20. So one hour got a penny a day. Those who worked 12 hours got a penny a day. Had nothing to do with the amount of work that they did. Has everything to do with God's grace and goodness. That's the basis of all this. Notice, therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace to the end, the promise might be sure to all the seed, not just the Jews. That's not just Israelites. Notice how he says this, not to only that which is of the law. Are you Jews following the Old Testament law today? But to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. Think of the song, "Father Abraham had many sons." By faith, we are children of, descendants of Abraham, spiritual descendants of Abraham. Again, the emphasis is on spiritual, not physical.

Verse 17, "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations." Oh, there's that statement again. Genesis 17:5, "I have made thee a father of many nations before whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead." Ephesians 2:1 says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, and called those things which be not as though they were, who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father." Notice how many times he emphasizes the father of many nations, not just Israel. "According to that which is spoken, so shall thy seed be." I believe the whole point here is if you don't believe yourself a descendant of Abraham, guess what? You're gonna be left out.

We are to follow in the steps of that faith of Abraham. How much, how many works did Abraham do? What did he have to do in order to be saved? It says he believed and the Lord accounted it to him for righteousness. "According to that which he spoke and so shall they seed be." Verse 19, "being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb." Now, notice he describes here the type of faith that Abraham had so that we understand what we need as far as faith. He's describing, explaining what Genesis 15 is all about.

First of all, we see here that faith is not limited by circumstances. It says, "being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead when he was about 100 years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb." As we think about some of these things, it says he considered not. There are things that people will point out that weaken some people's faith. I'm just going to give you an example. The Shroud of Turin. I really believe that's a lie of the devil to trick people. The Shroud of Turin. Supposedly that is the burial clothes of Jesus. What does the Bible say? It says that the face covering, the napkin, was folded and off to the side. I'm sorry, but that's not Jesus' burial clothes if the face is showing because they've been wrapped. That's all deception. Then people will read some things, some of these modern writings, you know, Jesus had a relationship with Mary Magdalene. [unintelligible] There are people's faith who has been shaken because they're reading all this stuff that is not scripture.

Not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead. He had to forget what his current situation was, and Sarah's, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, but notice, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." Now wait a minute, I thought the Old Testament Genesis, Book of Genesis said that Abraham laughed. Oh yeah, we remember Sarah laughed. Can I remind you, Abraham laughed as well. So what was that laugh all about? "Ha-ha, that is unbelievable, Lord." You know, there's some things that it's like, "Wow, Lord, that's unbelievable, humanly speaking."

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." Here's the type of faith Abraham had, as he looked at those stars, and the Lord said, "See if you can number them." "Lord, I can't number them." It says he was strong in faith, notice the result of this, giving glory to God. This goes back to what we saw early in verse 3 talking about glorying but not before God, verse 2, I should say. Being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.

Notice Ephesians chapter 3. Do we believe that the Lord is able? That's the type of faith that Abraham had. So practical application of this as we deal with somebody who's unsaved, do you believe that the Lord is able to save you without you having to do something? I don't know how many times I've heard people say something like this. "Oh, that sounds too easy. Oh, that sounds too easy." No, it wasn't easy. It took Jesus' all on the cross. "Well, that's just too easy." What are they saying about that? "I don't believe that the Lord is able to save me without me doing something."

Verse 20, "Now unto him that is able," notice, "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Notice there's the key as far as this giving glory to God. It's all about faith so that God will get the glory.

Notice verse 21, "And being fully persuaded, fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform." Again, Hebrews 6 talks about this. He trusted in the God who swore by himself. "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." Notice again this statement, imputed to him for righteousness. Faith is the basis of imputed

righteousness. Very clearly we see that. "Now it was not written for his sake alone." Here's the application, "that was imputed to him but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him." Here's the condition, "if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Obvious, very clear reference to the gospel here.

So faith in Jesus Christ is the basis of imputed righteousness. Notice again it says in verse 24, "for us also," not just for Abraham, "but for us also this was written, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Now here's the conditions for imputed righteousness. Now here's what we have as far as an issue in our lives. We all have a debt that we cannot pay. Matthew 18, various times Jesus talks about this. We all have a debt that we cannot pay. I cannot do enough to pay that debt. Remember Jesus said, frankly, he forgave them both. So you have a large debt, you have a smaller debt, you can't pay it. There's no way you can pay the debt. This is an obligation before God that you cannot pay. So notice here, based on faith, we have this imputed righteousness. So I have a sin debt that I cannot pay. Jesus has, remember the faith of Christ that we saw last time? Jesus has plenty of faith, he has plenty of righteousness. So literally, when I place my faith in the faith of Jesus Christ, guess what? God the Father says, "He has plenty of righteousness, I'm gonna give you his righteousness." My sin was placed on Jesus Christ on the cross. It is finished. He's suffered for sin. Your sin and my sin. Literally, I have a sin debt that I can't pay. Jesus Christ has plenty of righteousness for my account.

So by faith, the transaction is made. Jesus Christ took my sin debt and he gave me his righteousness. No works. No keeping the law. That's why it's my faith. Again, notice the condition what this is all about. "For us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Talking about the Lord Jesus, "Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Literally, we are declared righteous on the basis of my faith in what Jesus Christ has already done. I'm not gonna make the assumption here today that everyone has had this transaction made on their behalf. There are so many times, this is why I emphasize this so many times, I believe there are so many times when people have been deceived into thinking it's something they do that makes the transaction true. Okay, so we believe, you know, you don't have to be baptized, okay, but do you believe you had to pray? When were you saved? Well, I went down to the altar. I had this warm feeling come over me. It's still something you did. It's still something you had to do. We've just replaced the Catholic type of things, you know, you have to keep these sacraments. I have to say this prayer. It's nothing we do. It's believing what God said would be true. God the Father said, When you believe on My Son, there's an amazing transaction, your sin is gone, it's taken away, and you have this imputed righteousness." That is what imputed righteousness is all about and unless you have imputed righteousness today, guess what? If you're not trusting in what Jesus Christ is, and that's the basis of your salvation, you're trusting in something you can do, you're not saved today. You still have a sin debt that you cannot pay.

Lord, I pray that you'd help us to understand this amazing doctrine of imputed righteousness. Lord, there's no, absolutely no way a human being could have come up

with this plan. Father, you had to reveal it to us by way of the prophets and the apostles. And when we think of the example of Abraham, it says he just believed what the Lord said. Lord, is that true of us today? Is that true of us today? Lord, is everyone here a true believer in Jesus Christ and not something they do? Lord, I pray that you help us to understand this doctrine so that we can explain it to those who are confused about salvation. Lord, strengthen us in this truth, I pray, in Jesus' name, amen.