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Romans 4 verses 16 through 17. These are god's words. Therefore, it is of faith. That it might be according to grace. So that the promise might be sure. To all the seed.

Not only to those who are of the law. But also to those who are of the faith of abraham, Who is the father? Of us all. As it is written, i have made you a father. Of many nations. In the presence of him. Whom he believed. God. Who gives life to the dead?

And calls those things which do not exist. As though they did.

So far the reading of god's inspired. And inherent worked.

Well, the chapter chapter 4, begin asking the question, what then shall we say that abraham? Our father Has found according to the flesh. And the answer has been that he didn't. Uh, find according to the flesh. He found according to faith. That the flesh cannot find anything except for its own sin and its own misery.

That. That's what what we contribute to our salvation, to our righteousness, to our blessedness. But now the passage before us this week, and Next week, lord willing is answering the question. What did abraham find? Abraham found. The living god. Or rather he found. The the living god had sought after and found him.

As the apostle, says himself in another place, that he presses on to lay, hold of that. For which christ has laid. Hold of him. This is the great help to all believers that we are not seeking to find or to lay hold of something in ourselves. But that what we find is that god has sought us that god has led hold of us.

That we find him because we are. Found by him. Therefore, it is. Amazing grace. How sweet the sound? That the lord. Has found. Us, who has lost, who were lost and this of course, is the point of the whole letter, the letter began and the sixth verse of chapter 1 by saying that this is the gospel of god, that that's what paul was set apart for, he was set apart, not for the good news of Of works.

The good news of the new way by which we can make ourselves righteous. That false religion that asap was stumbling into and psalm 73 when he thought that he had cleansed his own hands and heart. And therefore he was stumbling. Or almost stumbling. No. What paul was set apart to preach is the gospel of god.

Which is the power of god, verse 16 for salvation. Of chapter 1 is the gospel of god or the power of god for it. It was the it is the righteousness of god. That is revealed. This is what abraham found. Abraham found that he had been found by the living god.

And this god centeredness or perhaps even better god obsessedness Has continued even as the apostle has been unfolding, what is this gospel of god about the? Which is the power of god about the righteousness of god? And as he's done. So since verse 17 of chapter 1, he has Let us along a path and which we have seen the wrath of god.

That is displayed against all unrighteousness, and all ungodliness of men. Verse 18 of chapter 1, because we have Uh seen but denied and pushed down upon the glory of god, chapter 1 verse 23. Of which therefore in our sin and our wickedness. We have fallen shorts, chapter 3, and verse 23.

And therefore man, although he could see it and knew it in himself and He was pushing down upon an even exchanged. The truth of god, For the lie. Man will come up with anything. Uh, to trade and in our Self-destructive wickedness. We'll exchange the truth of god for the lie.

You remember that live the devil that you can be like, god not made in god's image, which is our great glory? But attempted to put ourselves in the place of god. Which is. Our great shame. And our great sin and wickedness and curse. And so the judgment of god is known to all chapter 2 and verse 2.

But it hasn't fallen upon us yet. And so you remember in chapter 2 and verse 4 how the goodness of god That his forbearance and patience displays a goodness, that shouldn't make us think that the judgment of god is not real. Or that the judgment of god is not deserted deserved or that the judgment of god is not coming but the goodness of god should drive us to repentance.

That this god whose judgment we deserve. Because his glory, we have despised. Is yet patient because he is saving. And he calls us to turn from our sins. And so, we live in the sight of god chapter 2 and verse 13. And The law of which The jews had.

Had found a self-righteousness and pride about which Was actually a gift belonging to god, the oracles of god chapter 3 and verse 2. The great advantage of being a Jew. Not that they were great but that god had been greatly good to them. Giving them his own words, as if.

He was there speaking to them breathing out to them. Whenever they read their bibles or heard, Their bibles preached even as he has done. To us and the faithfulness of god. Which cannot be undone though, every Jew were to fail to believe. That wouldn't mean that god had been unfaithful.

Let god be true in every man, a liar and so forth. It's All been. About god. And so is the chapter had begun. Saying what none shall we say that abraham. Our father has found The answer is. It is not according to the flesh that he is found but it is according to faith.

That he has found god. To use the language of hebrews 11. He has found that god is. And that god is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Because as we have seen, God is the one who has given the seeking. In the first place that wonderful conclusion to which asap comes when he goes to.

And sees the holiness of god and suddenly, he's not saying in vain, i have cleansed my hands. But he realizes that he was being beastly towards god and that it was god who was with him the whole time god who had taken him by those dirty hands and kept him from following entirely into the stumbling and god.

Who now by his word was guiding him by his counsel and now god would receive him to glory. When so, god is the rewarder of those who seek him, because he is the giver of the seeking in the first place. And the examples, then there in hebrews 11 at two other examples.

Then the one that is before us this evening, referring back to Genesis 17 and this evening in particular, especially genesis 17. And verse 5, i have made you the father of many nations Um,

Well, but they're in hebrews 11. Abraham's willingness to dwell as a An immigrant in the land of promise.

That he was a sojourner and that, which was Uh, his by inheritance and his by promise and then Uh, closely related to what will be hearing about tonight in his conclusions and verse 17. As he hears the promise of god in genesis 17 later in Genesis 22, he'll have the same conclusion.

That. If by the commandment of god, i put my son. To death. There's a temporary death. Because here is god who brings life out of death and calls to things that are not as if they were and surely he will raise him from the dead. And so he didn't know that god was going to raise Isaac from the dead.

And so it was a forkon conclusion. Isaac was already dead to him as they walked together and they had the fire and the wood and i sick says Where is the? Where is the lamb? And he tells his son, who is dead before him already? The lord will provide.

The lab for the burnt offering. And he received him as it were back from the dead when god. Prevented, even the slaying. And gave him his son. By that resurrection as it were hebrews 11. And so this faith, that abraham had, That the god in whose presence. He had received the promise, the god from him.

He received the promise Is the god who is perfectly faithful to all of his words? And all mightily powerful. To keep those words. And god has given us words. About jesus christ. And the righteousness of jesus that is ours through faith in him. And the power of god to save us.

By giving us that faith in the sun whom he had given us so that in his son he would give us not only a righteous standing with himself, but in his son god gives us himself. Himself. So what do they have find? Abraham found god, he found the god of the promise.

And the god of power. So last week, he is. Talking about what circumcision? Uh did and what circumcision was and how it couldn't be a work because god had already counted abraham righteous through faith and got had already given and guaranteed abraham the the blessing of belonging to god and god belonging to him to which also the land was attached and and the offspring were attached but god himself being the great promise.

And god had given. Had designated faith. That was accounted for righteousness, not rewarded or repaid with righteousness, but accountant for righteousness, and God had given the promise, and god would not go back on his word now. He wouldn't turn this faith. That was accounted for righteousness with the righteousness of god himself.

He wouldn't account it as if it were nothing now, The circumcision of work to be added to that. He he wouldn't take the promise and turn it into a bunch of empty words. Where we say promise, but we ;-) about it. And really mean all of the things that you have to do.

That are attached to the promise. So that you show that you receive that well enough. It's not promise. I mean, that's the way many men in their wickedness promise, but not god.

And now he comes, and he says, Therefore, it is of faith. He said, in verse 14, if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void. Then he says verse 16 in our passage tonight. Beginning our passage tonight. Therefore it is a faith. That it might be according to grace.

Circumcision. Is a sign of faith. It's a seal of faith. It's a sign. And maybe we should do be a little bit more specific there unto faith. And a seal unto faith. So that righteousness and

salvation might continue to be according to grace. In other words, righteousness might continue to be not according to what you have done.

But according to what god has done. That righteousness and salvation would be not according to what you give god, but according to what he has given you and circumcision has to function this way. So that the promise might be sure. To all the seeds. So this relates to what we heard last week.

If circumcision is a work, if it is a religious procedure that you have to follow in order to get from god the covenantal blessings. So covenant sign that you follow in order to get covenant blessing, then the promises emptied but God didn't empty his promise. He confirmed his promise to Abraham.

He had a weak and doubting. Servant, even after he had brought him to righteousness through faith. And he gave him the sign. To assure him of the promise to confirm the promise to him. God's words. Don't need confirmation. We are the needy ones. Just as hebrews says, God, swore by himself to abraham.

And now, God has given the sign. So, circumcision is a sign and a seal, not a work. Not a religious mechanism to get stuff from god. You know, the way the Roman catholics think of their sacraments You're all these different things that are ways you can extract. Uh, goodness from God and worse.

Take a Withdrawal on the treasury of merit and All of that satanic nonsense. No circumcision is not a work, it is a sign and a seal so that justification will continue to be a faith and therefore according to grace, It's addition didn't make the promise empty, but it made it sure.

And notice to whom it made the promise more sure. Verse 16 to his seed, not only to those who are of the law. Okay, so a circumcised man, a circumcised man. At the time that paul is writing could read genesis 17 and say this was not given to abraham so that he could follow this to be righteous.

This was given to abraham who was already right to Through faith. This was not given to abraham so that biote he would obtain the promise. This was given to abraham to assure him that god who had promised his faithful and that the promise he had received from god was true.

And then the circumcised believer in jesus. The jewish believer in jesus would say and just as god gave that circumcision to abraham so that abraham could be sure. God gave me abraham's circumcision and mine so that i can be sure. So that i will know that believing in. Jesus is certainly counted for me, makes me to be counted as righteous as jesus is righteous.

So that i can know that all that is promised to me in jesus, namely, that i will have god himself fully and i will enjoy him fully, i'll be made like jesus, So that i don't just fully have god, but i enjoy him fully and perfectly forever. That, that promise is sure and certain no matter how weak my faith is now Because god gave me the faith and god gave me christ and he's given me a sign in to seal precisely because i am weaken my faith.

And so, the circumcised jewish believer in jesus, can say all of those things because he doesn't just, he's not just a child of abraham according to the law, but he also walks in the faith footsteps. Of abraham, remember from verse 12, the father Of the circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision.

But who also walk in the steps of the faith. Which our father abraham, i had while still uncircumcised, do you know who else can be assured by circumcision? The uncircumcised man. Because the believing gentile knows. That abraham received or was accounted righteous while he was uncircumcised and he received the sure promise while he was uncircumcised, And then god who hasn't given to the gentile circumcision to to affirm those things to confirm that righteousness, to confirm that promise.

But he did give it to abraham. And so the believing gentile reads genesis 17 and he remembers genesis 15 as instructed by Roman's chapter 4. And he says, my god. Who has counted me righteous through faith that he has given me? Who has given me promises? Want those who believe and who are righteous through faith to be sure.

About that righteousness. My god wants me to be sure that i have a right standing with him, that i can come respite. All my remaining sin, despite all of the things that i'm about to confess and ask for forgiveness for again and know with a certainty, there is now no condemnation for me.

He wants me to have boldness. And i know that because he gave my father, Who believed when he was uncircumcised. He gave my father, abraham a sign. To help him. Be sure when his faith was weak. But we can, we have this assurance not only because abraham has received circumcision, But because we have a sign as well, don't we?

Has he not given us baptism? Was it not given in the context when even among the 11? There were some who were doubting. And matthew chapter 28. And how did the resurrected savior respond to their doubting? In the same character as he said to to thomas the weak after he had risen from the dead, put your fingers in my hands, put your hand in my side.

Be assured. That the resurrection is real, and the tonement of of the cross is complete. Be assured, Thomas. And the savior who responded to the doubting apostle, in that way, has responded to the weakness of all of our faith. By a test by testifying that all authority in heaven and all authority on earth has been given to him.

And that a sign and seal of that authority. And the fact that what he is doing in that authority is making disciples. Taking to himself raiding. Satan's kingdom. To build his own out of redeemed, sinners. Who are not only brought to faith and counted righteous and given their citizenship in the kingdom.

But are there then also enabled to be made into good citizens of the kingdom by the power of the same one? Who has died and risen again and won the kingdom. And so, he responds to our doubting with a sign. A better sign than circumcision. There's not a bloody sign because there's blood that's been shed once for all.

And it's a sign that shows a cleansing that. Not only washes, our Our bodies as it were. That's not the main point. The water isn't the main point. He sprinkles our hearts clean from an evil conscience. So that we come and even though our faith is weak as we go, To him.

Who is our anchor through the veil? Like we heard lord's day afternoon. We come with our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Knowing that he whom the sun sets, free is free indeed, and he whom the son washes from their sin is cleansed indeed.

And we can know that we're righteous. In the presence of god. And we can know that as the day approaches. He is working in us more and more love and he is working in us more and

more good works. So that by the time, he actually brings us into the presence of his glory in a physical way.

He will have fit us for that glory. By his own power which is what he does assembly by assembly and the sabbath keepings that remain which is why we don't forsake those assemblies. But we come with boldness and we come with eagerness for more of what christ has done, what christ has won, what he will certainly complete doing and our baptism's affirm, all those things to us.

Because we're weaken faith. Because for many of us, all of us, It's actually harder from where we sit now and where we stand now, to believe that we are going to be there. Then it was for 99 year old abram abraham. And 89 year old Sarah. To believe that in a year's time, they would be holding baby Isaac.

In their arms.

And our baptisms assure us. That the god who has promised this faithful. That the righteousness that you get by trusting in jesus, through trusting in jesus. Buyers, maybe not as helpful there. The righteousness that is accounted for you when you trust in jesus. Is full and complete. And that the promise doesn't need anything from you.

It's made sure by the faithfulness of him, who promised? Are baptisms. Affirm those things to us. And the baptisms of our children. Affirm those things to us and they affirm those things about our children that as we look to god. To bless his means week by week in the assembly and day by day in our homes.

To bring our children to faith. The righteousness that they will get by. That faith is sure by what god does not by what we do with them, not by what they do with him. But by what he does with them. And we urged them. Don't you see what the what your baptism says about the faithfulness and effectiveness of jesus christ to saves.

Come to believe in him. Who commanded that? The water be put upon you because he pours out his spirit from heaven. Come son, come daughter. Let's pray again. That god, the holy spirit would give you faith in jesus christ. And that the sign by which you've been added to his visible church, Would become for you something that he uses to make you sure that you have been added to his eternal and invisible church.

Here's the god of promise, that's what abraham had found. Neighbor, i'm also found That he's the god of power. As it is written i have made you a father of many nations and we're going to be wanted to preach all the way through verse 22 but as you can probably see from the time already they're just we just couldn't.

We'll finish up lord willing lord helping us. Next week. But there he is. In Genesis 17. And When the When the promise was given that one from The one from his own body would be the air. And they were weak in in faith and some time passes and sarah doesn't get, sarah doesn't get pregnant.

And you remember what they did with hagar and now it's been some 13 years since Ishmael was born. And you can imagine the the complex mess inside Abraham's heart and mind. And then god comes. And he says, i'm giving you a sign. To go with that promise. And i'm giving you a name.

To go with that promise. You're not just going to be abram anymore, you're going to be abraham. For, i have made you the father of many nations. And what will hear about next

week? Lord willing. Is that as god was giving him that That new sign and that new name, god was also providing for him stronger faith.

Through the sign. And that stronger faith was to see. God, not just as the god, who is faithful to keep us promises but who is all mightily powerful to keep his promises. And here's the two things that god made to come to abraham's, mind, and heart come home to abraham's mind and heart that the one in whose presence, He was the one who was making these promises to him.

There in, Genesis 17 is two things. He is, god, who gives life to the dead and life to the dead and god, who calls things, which do not exist as though they did. He he gave him genesis chapter 1 and 2 faith. First of all, He made him realize that he was in the presence of the one who had promised And you and i need that.

And may the lord, give it to you. Do you realize that when you hear the preaching of the gospel of jesus christ? And that when you read the words of the spirit, the words of god, the words of christ about the gospel of jesus christ, you do. So in the presence of god, every bit, as much as if he had made a human manifestation, human appearing manifestation of himself in a theophony and had shown up at your door, the way he showed up at Abraham's door.

That's the point. And second Timothy when it says all scripture is god breathed. The conclusion that every word of it is a is, is god's word entirely. And so it, it has all of the perfection and all of the power and all of the truthfulness and all of the inherency and all of the sufficiency that belongs to, to God's words, those things are true but that's not the main point.

The main point when he says, Every word of scripture is god breathes or breathed out by god? Is that he addresses you personally? When you read the bible or hear it, preached, That it is living and active. It's not like other words. It is every bit as much him personally addressing you as if he appeared and took an appearance.

And compressed air through lungs and made it pass over vocal cords and around his tongue and through his lips and the the compression waves, vibrated your eardrums

And here, the holy spirit says, Abraham was realizing. That the one in whose presence he is. As he hears this promise. Is the one. Who gives life to the dead? And calls those things which do not exist as though they did. That he's the one who took dirt. And formed it.

And then breathed into the nostrils of what he had formed. And a living, man. Came out of dead dirt. That he is the one who had said, let the land bring forth and let the seas bring forth throughout chapter 1. And that the god who did that. Could surely.

Continue to give. A stumbling. Back sliding believer. The faith that he needed to have. The growth in grace that you needed to have. Because he would not account that faith for nothing, which had once been accounted already for righteousness. And he would not turn his promise into empty words.

And not only is he the one who gives life from the dead but he especially does it by his word by his promise. Look at the second half in verse 17 there. He calls those things which do not exist as though they did. This is one of the reasons why a little bit of Hebrew.

This is another example of where a little bit of Hebrew can go a long way. Because we all read in Genesis 1 in our English translations and god said. Let there be light. But that is not what the text says. It says, and god said to the light.

There's a problem, isn't there? How could he speak to the light? It's the light didn't exist yet. Except that when he commands something that doesn't exist to do something. It obeys in part. By first coming into existence, And so when god says to light, that has not yet exist.

Be The light comes into existence and obedience. And when God says, To a believer or to an unbeliever. Whom he is about to save. Believe. The faith. Comes into. Existence. And so this man who is already a believer, The way that god made him not to doubt to be sure of the promise.

Was to bring to his mind. This is the god who turns dead dirt into living people. And this is the god who can command faith into my faltering, heart. By the power of the word by which he commands it.

How much more for us? We can recall those things about god. Praise god, we do. But what are the displays? What are the great displays? Of the power of god to you. Dear christian. You have something greater than creation. You have incarnation, don't you? Isn't the, the Parallel for us, not genesis one but john 1.

The word god himself becoming flesh is a greater miracle than dirt. Becoming a man. And yet he did. Because while the law came through moses, grace and truth. Came through jesus christ. When the word became flesh. And we beheld, his glory Because he was so lovely. Or so manly.

No, through faith. It's faith. That sees his glory. As of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth, Not only creation, not only incarnation. But his resurrection from the dead.

Which is not just. Calling to something that was not as though it were. It's someone who is dead. Still having the authority to take up his life again. And the resurrection is the power by which we Are regenerated. And so whenever You are trembling. At the, I'm just gonna say slowness, but someone sometimes, it feels as if his backward regression.

Of our sanctification. We can say, like abraham and genesis 17. He's done harder things before. The incarnation and the resurrection are harder things than this. And he works in me by his word that he puts in my heart and that he puts in my mouth so that i don't have to ascend to heaven.

To get jesus to come down in the incarnation and i don't have to descend into the abyss to bring jesus up in the resurrection. No god, by his power. Has already accomplished the incarnation and the resurrection. And the instrument by which he works in that same power. Is the word that he has brought near me.

And put in my mouth. And put in my heart. And a tested by my baptism. So that i may be sure. Of him.

God assures you His salvation does not depend. Upon the strength of your faith and the promise. But the faithfulness of him who promised. It depends on the strength of his power. To keep you in the faith and to grow you in the faith. Maybe strengthen us. By the assurance of his word.

And his sign. Amen,