

Today's Reading

(Sunday 9 June 2024)

Romans 4:1-8, 13-25

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.

15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”

19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

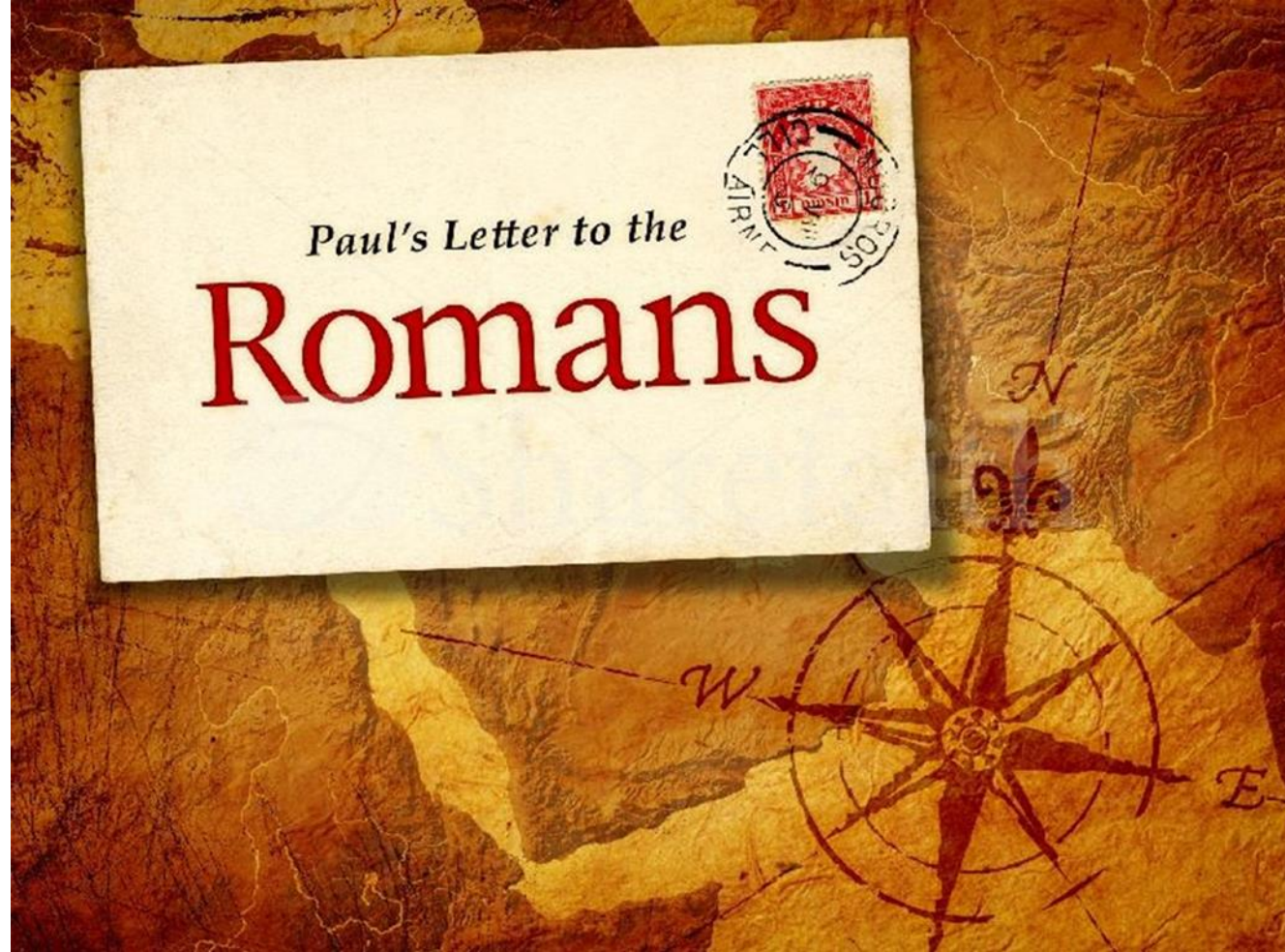
21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

22 That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”

23 But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,

24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,

25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.



**Old Testament Righteousness
(Romans 4:1-8, 13-25)**

Exemplum (*Latin*)

1. An example

2. A brief story used to make a point in an argument or illustrate a moral truth

(The American Heritage College Dictionary, 4th edition)

- Singular: “**exemplum**”
- Plural: “**exempla**”

I. Old Testament Exempla

A. The Good Works of the Patriarchs and Kings

1. Abraham's Good Works
2. David's Good Works

B. The Sins of the Patriarchs and Kings

1. Abraham's Failures
2. David's Failures

C. Old Testament Righteousness through Faith

1. Abraham's Faith
2. David's Faith

A. The Good Works of the Patriarchs and Kings

1. Abraham's Good Works

- **Peace-loving:** settles border dispute with his nephew Lot (Genesis 13:8-13)
- **Valorous:** rescues Lot when captured during a conflict (Genesis 14:11-16)

¹¹ **The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food;** then they went away. ¹² **They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions,** since he was living in Sodom.

¹³ A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. ¹⁴ **When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit** as far as Dan. ¹⁵ During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ **He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.** (Genesis 14:11-16)

A. The Good Works of the Patriarchs and Kings

1. Abraham's Good Works

- **Hospitable:** welcomes three visiting angels (Genesis 18:1-15)
- **18** And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ **Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree,** ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." (Genesis 18:1-5)
- **Compassionate:** intercedes for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:16-33)

A. The Good Works of the Patriarchs and Kings

2. David's Good Works

- Defeated Goliath in combat (1 Samuel 17: 1-58)
- Defeated the Philistines in battle (2 Samuel 5:17-25)
- Prepared plans for the building of the temple (1 Chronicles 22)

B. The Sins of the Patriarchs and Kings

1. Abraham's Failures

- Out of fear for his life, Abraham lies to King Abimelech that Sarah is his sister and not his wife. God intervenes to prevent Abimelech from taking Sarah for his harem (Genesis 20:1-16). A similar situation had earlier occurred in Egypt with the Pharaoh (Genesis 12:10-20)
- Failed to protect and provide for his son Ishmael by the slave girl Hagar when Sarah wanted them banned from camp (Genesis 21:8-21)

B. The Sins of the Patriarchs and Kings

1. David's Failures

- Had an affair with Bathsheba and had her husband, Uriah the Hittite, killed (2 Samuel 11)
- Failed as a father to deal with the transgression of Amnon and the attempted coup by Absalom (2 Samuel 13-18)
- Took a census of available soldiers thus putting his faith in his army and his own self-reliance rather than humbly trusting in God (2 Samuel 24:1-17)

“Faith”: Defined

- **11** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

C. Old Testament Righteousness through Faith

1. Abraham's Faith

- **Land:**
- ¹⁴ After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. ¹⁵ I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession. . . . ¹⁸ **So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.** (Genesis 13:14-15, 18)
- ⁸ **By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.** And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

C. Old Testament Righteousness through Faith

1. Abraham's Faith

- **Descendants:**
- ⁵ And he [God] brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ **And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.** (Genesis 15:5-6)
- **Obedience:**
- ¹⁷ **By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac,** and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ **He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead,** from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

C. Old Testament Righteousness through Faith

1. David's Faith (and Confession)

- **Psalm 32:1-5 (used in Romans 4:7-8)**
- Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- ³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
- ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

David's Faith, Humility, and Repentance

- **Psalm 51:16-17**
- For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

II. Our Need for Humility and Faith

A. Defining “Gift” vs “Wage”

B. God’s Gifts to Us through Faith

1. Repentance, Not Pride
2. Faith, Not Works
3. Justification, Not Debt
4. Regeneration, Not Deadness
5. Sanctification, Not Stagnation

II. Our Need for Humility and Faith

A. Defining “Gift” vs “Wage”

- **“Wage”**: “Payment for labor or services to a worker”
- “Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. (Romans 4:4)”
- “The laborer deserves his wages” (1 Timothy 5:18b)

- **“Gift”**: “Something bestowed voluntarily and without compensation”
- “I Owe You One”: An inappropriate ledger-mentality
- Humility: the appropriate state of mind
- “Thank You”: an appropriate response
- Do not frustrate the generosity of the giver: “¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ **Do not quench the Spirit**” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19).

II. Our Need for Humility and Faith

B. God's Gifts to Us through Faith

1. Repentance, Not Pride
2. Faith, Not Works
3. Justification, Not Debt
4. Regeneration, Not Deadness
5. Sanctification, Not Stagnation

Takeaway:

Two Testaments but Only One Means of Righteousness: Faith

Romans 4:20-25

Our Faith is Counted as Righteousness as Well

- 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,
- 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.
- 22 That is why **his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”**
- 23 **But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,**
- 24 **but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,**
- 25 **who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**

A silhouette of two hands holding a glowing cross against a sunset background. The hands are positioned in the center-right of the frame, with the fingers spread and the palms facing each other. A bright, glowing cross is centered between the hands, emitting a strong light that creates a lens flare effect. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and spiritual.

Let Us Pray