

TUTORIAL
3.8

The Results of Justification

Bible presenter Scot Keen wraps up Romans chapter 4 with Old Testament examples of being justified by faith. He then introduces Romans chapter 5 with the results of justification, one of them being the security of the believer.

Introduction

In the last tutorial, we looked at the theological basis for our justification. We used two key theological terms that speak about Christ's payment which frees us from our sins and satisfies God's wrath, namely, the redemption that is in Christ and the propitiation through faith in His blood. Now Paul launches into another section with Old Testament examples of people who were justified by faith. Let's delve into those examples.

Old Testament Examples

One thing that is significant to note about Romans chapter four is that Paul elaborates on the things that he says in chapter three. At the end of chapter three, he says, "Boasting is excluded." In chapter four, he shows that Abraham has no right to boast. In chapter three, he says that boasting is excluded because we're justified by faith not by works. In chapter four, he shows that Abraham was justified by faith not by works. In chapter three, he shows that both Jews and Gentiles were justified by faith. In chapter four, he shows that both Jews and Gentiles are children of Abraham through faith. So chapter four is all about Paul elaborating on the things that he said in chapter three.

This is significant because it shows that it is Paul's desire for us to truly grasp what he said in chapter three. He wants us to know that justification is a gift and is received by faith and by faith alone. It was so important for Paul that he gave us an extra chapter just to elaborate on those things. As we look at these Old Testament examples of justification by faith, the first major point Paul makes is that men who were justified in the Old Testament were justified by faith apart from works, which is the same for us today. He begins with Abraham, and then he gives an example from David.

Justified Apart from Works

Let's look at Romans 4:1, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?" Paul uses Abraham and David as his Old Testament examples. They were the two most respected men of God in the Old Testament by the Jews, and so to use them as examples would be a convincing case. Paul says in Romans 4:2, "For if Abraham 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 credited to him as righteousness'". Paul makes it clear that Abraham was credited with righteousness apart from works. He was credited with righteousness by faith.

The term *credited* alludes to legal accounting. Picture our record before we had faith in God and it would look blank, as far as righteousness is concerned. We are bankrupt of righteousness. There is no one righteous. Not even one. We recognize that apart from Christ, we have no righteousness. As far as sin on our record, Paul says in Romans chapter three that both Jews and Greeks are under sin. We have all turned aside. We were condemned already and without an excuse to give. That was our record before God.

Go back to the Abraham example. He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. This righteousness, we have already learned, is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. It is God's righteousness. It is perfect and so cannot be improved upon. Abraham's faith was counted as righteousness. It was not that Abraham's belief was a righteous thing. All he did was simply believe God's promise, and God credited righteousness to him on that basis.

Notice in Romans 4:4, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." Paul is making a contrast here between the one who works and the one who does not work. To the one who works, whatever that person receives, it is not a gift. It is just wages. It is payment for services rendered, but for the one who does not work but believes, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Really, I think this is a very important aspect in ministry to keep in mind. When we share Christ with others we need to remember that they cannot receive the righteousness of God as long as they are trying to work for it. Paul says God's righteousness is for the one who does not work but believes. As long as someone is trying to work for righteousness, they cannot have it, because God only gives it through faith in Christ. Paul is contrasting works and faith. As far as salvation goes, it is only for people who do not work for it.

Sometimes people argue that it is good to believe the Gospel, and mankind cannot do anything good. Therefore, mankind cannot believe the Gospel. This

is what is called a fallacy of equivocation. It is an illogical argument. It is using a term in two different ways. It is good to believe the Gospel, and mankind cannot do anything good as far as meriting God's salvation, but we cannot extend that to say that mankind cannot believe the Gospel. Paul says God's righteousness is for the one who does not work but believes. That means that faith is not a work. It is simply receiving God's testimony as truth.

Paul says, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." I'll give an illustration hopefully drives this point home. Years ago, I took a ministry trip to Papua New Guinea. Upon arrival, I discovered that even though I had been invited to come I was still expected to pay for my own travel. I thought it was going to be paid for by the people who invited me. When I was onsite in this ministry location, I was presented with this large bill. I thought, "Man, what am I going to do? How am I going to pay for this?"

I was studying Romans chapter four at the same time, and thought, "Wouldn't it be so cool if I received an email from someone saying, 'Scot, we paid your bill, you don't have to worry about it any longer'". Of course that never happened, and so I had to pay the bill myself. However if I had received a note saying that the bill was paid for, I would not have tried to pay it. In other words, if I really believed that someone had paid my price, I would not worry about paying that price any longer. When we trust Christ the Savior, we are not trying to pay Him back for what He has done. We are not trying to atone for our sin. We are resting because we believe God's promise that our penalty has been paid in full.

Paul gives another example, this time King David. In Romans 4:6, Paul says, "Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works." Then he quotes from Psalm thirty-two, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!" This is really significant. Please catch this. Justification is more than "just as if we had never sinned."

Justification is more than our sins being forgiven. It is also being credited with righteousness. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. That speaks about something positive being placed on his account. Then Paul uses David as an example in Romans 4:6, "The man to whom God credits righteousness," it sounds like he's talking about something positive placed on our account. Then it is all about the negative (sin) being removed when he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!"

Justified Apart from Circumcision

These two examples show that justification deals with our sins being removed, and God's righteousness being credited to our account. In Romans 4:9, Paul says, "Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also?" He says, "We say, 'Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness'. How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised." This brings us to the next major point. Paul is showing that not only are we justified by faith apart from works, but we are also justified by faith apart from circumcision.

Now, that may seem irrelevant to you. However, it was very relevant to the Jews in the first century. Paul is explaining that people who came from a Jewish background had no advanced standing over the Gentile believers. They were all one in Christ. He insists that works could not save, nor could divinely prescribed rights (such as circumcision). In Romans 4:10, Paul says again that Abraham was not credited with righteousness when he was circumcised, but rather when he was uncircumcised. When Abraham believed God in Genesis fifteen, he had not yet been circumcised.

In that sense, Abraham was a justified man who was uncircumcised. Later he received the sign of circumcision, "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them" (Romans 4:11). It is interesting that Abraham was justified when he was uncircumcised. That makes him the father of all who believe who are uncircumcised, such as the Gentile believers. He was also a justified man who was later circumcised. In that sense, he is also the father of circumcised believers or Jewish believers.

Paul goes on to say that Abraham is the father of all who believe both the circumcised and uncircumcised. Paul is doing is the same thing he did in chapter three. He is showing that both Jew and Gentile believers are united as children of Abraham through faith. Abraham is the father of all who believe. He goes on to speak about some of the blessings that come by faith. Paul reminds us that Abraham and the promises were given apart from law, and on that grounds, the promises extend to Gentile believers as well.

Abraham's Faith

Let's move onto Romans 4:17-25. Look at Abraham's faith and how it was an example for all. Notice verse seventeen, "As it is written, 'A father of many nations have I made you in the presence of him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.'" We

find these obstacles to Abraham's faith as Paul is showing his faith as a model. He wants us to see the obstacles that Abraham faced.

There are more obstacles in verse eighteen, "In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, 'so shall your descendants be.'" Then verse nineteen, "Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb." This is a beautiful picture of faith. Abraham didn't ignore his circumstances, although they were against him. He was almost a hundred years old, and he considered that. He knew he was an old man. Not only that, he knew that Sarah was in no place to be a mother because her womb was barren.

The beautiful thing is that Abraham recognized that he was too old to father a child. He knew too that Sarah was past the age of child-bearing, and yet he hoped against hope. Circumstances offered him no hope, but God's Word did. He believed that God could do the impossible. Specifically, he believed (verse seventeen) in a God who gives life to the dead. Sarah had a dead womb, but God gives life to the dead. Not only that, but he believed in a God who calls into existence things that do not exist. Just like God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God called light into existence. God was going to call into existence a nation from Abraham, and similarly he was going to call into existence a nation from Sarah's dead womb. After all, He is a God who can call into existence things that do not exist and give life to the dead.

Look at Romans 4:20-22, "With respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, he was able also to perform. Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness." Paul is saying that Abraham gave glory to God, believing God could do what God said he would do. When you and I believe God's Word, we simply trust that God can do or has done what He said He will do or did do. We are trusting God's word. When Abraham did that, it was credited to him as righteousness.

That is a quick overview of chapter four Paul used Abraham and David as examples of people who were justified by faith apart from works. He showed us that circumcision had nothing to do with that, a very important statement for the Jews. He showed that God's promises are realized by faith and not by law, another important point for the Jews to hear. Then he gave Abraham's faith as an example for all who would later believe, and therefore be justified. Next Paul talks about the results of justification, what comes as a result of having trusted Christ as our Savior. We will find the benefits of being justified by faith in Romans 5:1-11. We will also see an emphasis on our security as believers.

Results of Justification

Let's look at Romans 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What I want you to catch in this section is Paul's excitement. I have to make a confession here. When I first studied Romans 5:1, I was keen to bypass it to get to Romans 5:12 for some meaty theology. But I discovered a lot of good stuff in Romans 5:1-11. Notice Paul's excitement here. Paul uses phrases like *we have*, *also we have*, and *not only this, but we also, much more than, much more*, and *not only this*. Paul was obviously excited with all the things that we have because of our faith in Christ.

Present Benefits

Paul says, "Having been justified by faith," which shows that justification is not a process. It is an event. We are not in the process of being justified. We have been justified. Since we have been justified in the past, the promises are things that are true of us now. They are present possessions as believers. The promises include, first of all, peace with God. It refers to the fact, not of a subjective feeling, but of a legal standing. We were enemies of God and under God's wrath, and now we are at peace with God. There is no hostility towards us. This peace is not a subjective feeling, but rather a state of being at peace with God. The war is over, so to speak.

Paul says, "We have this peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and then, "Through whom (through Christ) we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand." Consider Paul's language here. He says we are standing in grace. How can we stand in grace? What does that mean? Well, standing speaks of being positioned somewhere. My standing is in grace, and grace speaks of God's unearned favor. Since we have been justified by faith, we are positioned in God's unearned favor. God's posture towards us is one of grace, one of favor. And that is always true. We are always standing in the God's favor.

When I was a child I would make new friends and it felt like we were best friends for a whole day, and then I would do something wrong, or they would do something wrong, and then I moved on to my next best friend, only for the pattern to be repeated. In contrast, God says in Romans chapter five that we are standing in His favor. His posture towards us is one of kindness and that will not change. We are standing in God's grace. Not only that, but Paul says, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

I have a few comments on that statement. Hope in Scripture speaks of anticipation that is based on certainty. It speaks of something I know is going to happen, and because of that, I have excitement now even though it has not taken place yet. When Paul says, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God," he is speaking about glorification. He is saying that we rejoice now because we are going to share in glory, we are going to be glorified together with Christ. In other words, we are celebrating the ultimate aspect of our salvation, which is glorification. And Paul is excited about that even now.

Of course it is something to rejoice about. But we may be surprised at what Paul says next, "Not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations." This is a worldview paradigm shift. To rejoice in tribulations is to rejoice in difficulties. Why would Paul say that we rejoice in tribulations? He goes on to say that we rejoice knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance. Perseverance brings about proven character. Proven character brings about hope. We rejoice in the difficult circumstances of life because God uses them to mature us in the faith.

That is not something we know by experience, so much as something we know by faith in God's word. "We know," Paul says, "We know that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint." The idea is that as God takes us through the difficulties of life, we come to trust His character even more and more and more. Think about David and Goliath. Remember when David wanted to go out and fight Goliath? His brothers tried to discourage him. David replied that his God had delivered him from the paw of a bear and from a lion. David trusted God. God delivered him from a bear and a lion, and because of that, David was willing to trust God in his fight against a new enemy, which was Goliath.

My point is that when we go through stretching circumstances and find that God is faithful, we are ready to trust Him in even bigger areas. That is what Paul is alluding to here, "And our hope in God is not disappointed." Our hope in God will not be disappointed because of God's love. Note that Paul is speaking about our ultimate hope of being glorified together with Christ. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Our glorification will not be disappointed, and we know that based on the love of God.

Security in Christ

Look at Romans 5:6-8, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." I will walk you through Paul's arguments here. Sometimes people get tripped up on the terminology in the verse above because Paul says, "A righteous man," and then "A good man." A righteous man here would be someone who lived according to the standard of the Law, but a good man would be someone who went above and beyond the call of duty.

Paul says that one would hardly die for a righteous person, but maybe for a good person someone would possibly die. Let me just put that another way. There are certain people of whom you would say, "I might possibly die for that person." For example, you may say you would be willing to die for one of your children or for your wife or husband. There are certain people you are so fond

of that you may be willing to die for them. In essence, Paul is saying, “Human love at its best would die for some people, but not for all.”

In contrast look at verse eight, “God demonstrates his love, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Paul says human love might die for some people. God's love is so powerful that He would die for even the most undeserving of us while we were still sinners. God's love exceeds even the most extreme form of human love. I love verse eight. Paul says, “God demonstrates his love.” God is (present tense) showing His love, and the way He is (present tense) showing His love is that in the past, Christ died for our sins. He uses past tense at the end.

Sometimes people say, “If God really loves me, why doesn't He show me that He loves me?” Paul says, “He did show you, and He is showing you now by what He already did in history when Christ died for our sins.” He gives another example in verses nine and ten, “Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” And we also see in verse eleven, “And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Paul is emphasizing the security that the believer has in Christ. He says that hope does not disappoint because of the love of God. As a believer is expecting glorification, Paul says, “They have confidence in that because, first of all, God's love is greater than human love.” That is his first statement of defense. Then he says in verse nine, “Having been justified...we will be saved from the wrath of God through him.”

In essence, Paul is saying, “If He has already justified us, surely He is going to continue His work in us. If God did the more difficult thing (Christ dying for our sins while we were sinners) then surely now that we are reconciled, He will complete His work in us.” Both verses nine and ten have basically the same argument. God did something while we were sinners, verse nine, “Having been justified by His blood,” and verse ten, “We were reconciled.” If God justified us, if He reconciled us while we were sinners, surely, He will continue His work and save us from His wrath. Paul is giving an argument for the security that a believer has in Christ.



DISCUSSION POINTS

The Results of Justification

1. Why does Abraham have nothing to boast about?
2. What verse indicates that faith is not a work?
3. Why would Paul use Abraham and David as examples of those who were justified by faith? How would that help him connect with his audience?
4. What is the “blessing” that Paul refers to in verse 9?
5. What is the meaning of the phrase; “in hope against hope he believed”?
6. What are the results of justification that we find in 5:1-11?
7. What does it mean to be “standing in grace”?
8. Tribulations provide an opportunity to?