

***Romans 040***  
***Justified by Faith***  
***Explanation Furthered***  
***Romans 4:1-8***

- 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. KJV

**Introduction:**

I anticipate that some might be asking the question, “Why are we continuing to discuss this issue of Justification by Faith?” One might think, “I am right with God, I have been saved, let’s move on to something new and more interesting.”

We might notice in response that Paul continued to discuss it even after he had made his point in chapter 3. Let us consider some reasons to discuss the matter further.

1. First of all, the matter of most attack from the kingdom of darkness is the matter of True Conversion and man’s understanding of it. Never do we find a heresy but we also find a corrupt version of Justification by Faith.
2. God’s Plan contains items which man does not naturally like... so there is always the temptation to minimize those issues... or leave them out altogether.
3. The better we understand the whole picture the more we will be motivated to worship God for the amazing way that He has saved us.
4. Paul’s great desire and continual prayer was that Christians grow in their knowledge of God.

Col 1:9-10

- 9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
- 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; KJV

5. There is nothing which so clearly reveals the Person and Character of God as the Great Work of Christ and the Work of God to bring men to Himself.

That being said, I want to return for a few minutes to an issue we have already mentioned.

Rom 3:26

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. KJV

This last week as I was listening to some sermons on this section of scripture I realized that there is an important issue here which must not be missed, ***God is Just.***

What does that mean?

6. It means that He never does anything that is not proper in the most perfect sense imaginable.
7. It means He will never punish a person who is not guilty of a crime.
  - We hear stories all of the time of innocent people who have been imprisoned for crimes they did not commit.
  - So, have you ever spent time meditating on how God could punish Jesus for crimes He did not commit?
  - I encourage you to spend some time this week thinking about that.
8. Being Just also means that God will not let a single guilty person escape punishment, and,
9. It means that every sin, every crime, will be perfectly punished, the sinner receiving the full penalty for every sin.

And, if that is so, how are you going to escape the full weight of the Wrath and Judgment of God?

Now, some may say, "Jesus paid my debt," but I ask you, "How is that perfectly Just?" The debt was yours and you did not pay it.

Others may say, "God forgives me because He is merciful."

- And He is merciful, but if He forgives without complete payment for the sin, how is He Just?

And, then, there will be the explanation that Jesus died in our place.

- But that answer has the same problem.
- How can He die in my place and God still be Just since I sinned while Jesus never did?

If we are ever going to understand we are going to need to know a lot more about God, a lot more about Jesus Christ and a lot more about what that thing was He did on the Cross.

I am not going to answer the question right here but I challenge you to ponder it through the week.

How can God justify you, the sinner, and still be Just Himself?

How can and Absolutely and Perfectly Just God punish Jesus Christ for your sins and then treat you as perfectly righteous and holy when it is obvious that you are not?

Doesn't that compromise his Perfect Justice?

When you can truly answer that question and have comprehended the Magnificent Effort that went into you being Justified by Faith you will have begun to understand why it was so important to Paul.

***That being said, let us return to our text.***

We saw last week that Abraham was called by God, which is always the first act in any conversion.

As with all other conversions, this 'call' carried with it the 'enabling,' the Grace, to respond. It did something to Abraham which moved him to obey, to gather up his family and move to a strange land already inhabited by an accursed group of people, the descendants of Canaan, the grandson of Noah and the son of Ham.

Gen 9:24-25

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. KJV

So, Abraham arrived in this land of Canaan which would come ultimately to be called Israel. There God made promises to him concerning blessings to his descendants and their inheritance of the land. Moses wrote concerning his response to the promises:

Gen 15:6

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. KJV

In verses 4 and 5 of our text in Romans chapter 4 Paul explained what should ever be obvious, Grace and Works are mutually exclusive in this matter of Justification. If it is by Faith, the Justification cannot be by Works.

- And I must mention again, this is the place where Satan has always attacked the gospel.
- Either he presents a 'Faith' that is not truly faith (the kind that God gives, enables, through Grace.)
- Or, he presents Justification as based on a Work which, he explains, is "not really a work."

But Paul's formula must ever be remembered and affirmed, "For by Grace (God's enabling power) you have been saved (Justified) through Faith and that (Faith) not out of yourselves (not produced by you) it is the Gift (freely given, given without a cause) of God." Eph 2:8,9.

This is the hill that every True Gospel minister will die on.

*Then, Paul quoted a piece of Ps 32, vs 1,2.*

Ps 32:1-2

- 1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
- 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. KJV

But, let me explain something about the NT writers and how they quoted OT passages.

They did not do what many modern preachers do, quote a text and then never reference it again or pull it complete out of its' setting and use it to affirm something never referenced in the context from which it was taken.

Often if you will take the sermon 'text' and go to the full passage from which it was quoted you will find the original writer saying something very different from what the 'preacher' used the text to affirm.

This is an awful and a dishonest way to deal with God's Word.

What the NT guys did when they quoted the OT, with very few, if any, exceptions was to say essentially, "Here is a passage from the scriptures on my topic, go look at the whole thing."

And, that is what we want to do now with this passage in Psalm 32.

We have already looked at this.

Ps 32:1-2

- 1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
- 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. KJV

There is a three-fold blessing here and Paul obviously included Abraham in this set of ideas. We are obviously looking at things said about him, about David and about all who would have the kind of Faith that Paul is discussing.

- Transgression is forgiven
- Sin is covered
- God refuses to impute iniquity to him

Then, he made the comment, "there is no deceit (guile) in his heart," which is another way of saying, such a person is exceptionally honest. And, of course, he is talking about spiritual honesty, something I like to call "integrity of soul."

What is being referenced here is that this person is honest with God and honest with himself about his spiritual condition and his sins. It is important to see this because of the next passage we are about to consider.

But, again, the question arises, “How can God do this and remain Perfectly Just?” The Transgression, the Sin and the Iniquity is Real.

There is no question, of course, but that Paul considered the man in the verses to be a man of Faith. And we cannot doubt but that David was speaking first of himself and the of all those who would “Trust in the Lord.” See. 32:10

But, notice that he transitioned from what he was saying in v.2 directly into vs.3,4.

The topic moves, if you will, from being forgiven to what transpired prior to him coming to be in that state of forgiveness.

Ps 32:3-4

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

There had been a time in David’s life prior to him knowing this blessedness of forgiveness when he was in a terrible agony.

He felt as if his bones were wasting away and there was a misery upon him that made him groan continually.

He seemed to be dehydrated as if by the summer heat.

And none of this was because of a physical ailment. The AMP reads v.4 this way, “For day and night Your hand (of displeasure) was heavy upon me...”

God is displeased with men for only one reason, they have sinned. And, sin is defined in terms of God’s Law. It is either a violation of or a lack of conformity to His Laws.

Violation, for example, would be coveting someone else’s property when God said, “Do Not Covet.”

Lack of conformity would be failing to love God with one’s whole heart, mind, soul and strength when He plainly gave it as the First and Greatest of all of His Commands.

But, the real issue is how one responds to that when he comes face to face with the truth of it. Will he be honest before God and to himself about it?

We looked a couple of weeks ago at the statement that the Law is our Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

But, many wonder How?

- We know that a teacher cannot teach anything to a disinterested student.
- So one must bring the process with interest in the question, “How can I be right with God?” The interest must be real and profound or the student will learn nothing.
- For the interested one (God must grant the interest) the most logical answer seems to be “by becoming a better person.” Almost every single person who ever seeks to be Justified before God begins with trying to be a good person, more moral, less sinful.

But at every effort the interested person is slapped down by the Law as it reveals ever and over, “you cannot stop sinning.”

This goes on, sometimes for months, sometimes for years, until, finally, the despairing soul becomes exhausted, broken-hearted and ready to quit, just as David described here.

Ultimately, if he is able to hear the truth, (if God grants that to him), the Law will finish teaching him the lesson, he is a hopeless sinner and is doomed to an eternity of Judgment unless, somehow, God has mercy on him.

So, he cries out. He does what David did. He repents of his sins.

- 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

He acknowledges his sin honestly and truthfully

He is honest about it all

He confesses his transgressions individually

And, he understands that full resolution may take a while, that God is not like a restaurant waiter.

When God hears, salvation comes.

- 6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.
- 7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Understand this, Paul was deliberately pulling all of this into the discussion of Justification by Faith.

***This is the reason we need to have full and long discussions concerning this matter.***

In one sense it is a simple proposition, “Believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

And, on the other hand, there is much that is involved,

The Nature of God

The Nature of Man

The Work of Christ

The Law as our Schoolmaster

The Nature of Saving Faith

The Progression of a soul from interest in spiritual things to Assurance of Salvation

Are you converted?

Are you Justified by Faith?

In the way Paul had in mind as he wrote this to the Romans?