

In step with Jesus 166

August 24, 2025

Key Text: “For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” (Romans 4:3)

Introduction

Today we will continue reading Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul had addressed his epistle to the believers in Rome, who were mostly Jews at that time. From the first to the third chapter of his letter, we have seen that Paul’s key message for his audience, and to us, is that God is the God of the whole earth, not just the God of the Jews. Therefore, His law, His grace, and His judgement are universal. Yet, He justifies both the Jew and the Gentile by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul’s message of justification by faith continues in Romans chapter four. In chapter four he uses God’s relationship with Abraham as an illustration of how God justifies all of humanity by faith even before they do any work. Let us read Romans chapter four verses one to fifteen and see what we can learn as we continue our walk with Jesus Christ.

Romans 4: 1-15

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.”

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as

well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. 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.

Reflections

I pause to give all the glory to God who is making this teaching clearer. As stated in previous lessons, understanding Paul's teaching in the book of Romans is to understand the science of salvation. In Today's reading, Paul declares that even Abraham, the father of faith, received justification, not by works, but by faith. He points out that Abraham's justification came before his circumcision. Abraham simply believed God, and it was counted to Him as righteousness. And because Abraham believed, he could obey God when He commanded him to be circumcised. If we think about the fact that Abraham was an old man by the time he subjected himself to the rite of circumcision, we will know that he genuinely believed God to be able to go through the pain of circumcision. He trusted God who initiated the covenant with him. Paul tells us that Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness he already had by faith so that he would be the father of all who believe, both the circumcised and the uncircumcised.

Like Abraham, God justified us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The moment we believe God; He counts it for us as righteousness, but our faith must affect the way we live. Therefore, we have received God's covenant or commandments as a seal for the righteousness we have received by faith. Our obedience to God's laws is a sign that we believe that it is God who justified us. And just as Abraham's circumcision enabled him to be the father of the faithful, our obedience to God's law enables us to be channels of light to the people around us. When we live in obedience to God, we reflect God's character, and we lift Jesus before the people. Jesus said in John 3:14 and 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." The salvation we received is not just for ourselves. God saved us, so that others might be saved through us. Let us lift Jesus in our character so that He will draw our family members, our friends, and our neighbors to Himself.