

In step with Jesus 167

August 31, 2025

Key Text: “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

Introduction

Last week we started reading Romans chapter four. In the verses we read, Paul drew his readers’ attention to the foundation of their religion, which was God’s covenant with Abraham. The Jews were priding themselves as the circumcised custodians of the law of God, and therefore, the exclusive heirs to God’s promises and more favorable to God than people of other nations. But Paul literally demolished their wall of exclusivity by revealing the fact that even Abraham, the father of faith, was not justified by law, but by faith. Paul also points out that Abraham’s justification was not just a gift to Abraham and his offspring, but a gift to the whole world. The key lesson we need to internalize from what we have read in Romans chapter 4 is that we are saved by grace so that through our salvation, others may be saved. There is no room for selfishness, there is no room for self-righteousness. Just as the sun does not hide its light, but freely shines to brighten and energize the world, we must shine in the light we have received from Jesus Christ.

Today we will read the remaining verses of Romans chapter four. However, instead of starting from verse 16, we will start reading from verse 13. This is because verse 13 and 14 lays a solid foundation for the understanding of the remaining verses. Let us read together and see what the Holy Spirit will teach us.

Romans 4: 13-25

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^[b] 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.

Reflections

Having established that Abraham was justified by faith, Paul went ahead to reveal what faith looked like for Abraham. Abraham simply believed that God is who He said He is and would do what He says He will do. Abraham’s faith would not have made sense to the people around him. He was an old man and did not have any child. His wife was also old, and barren. But God promised him that he would be the father of many nations, and Abraham believed God, against all visible evidences before him. Paul said he believed Him who brings up the dead and calls into existence the things that did not exist.

If we closely examine the life of Abraham and the writings of Paul concerning him, we will discover that there are two parts to faith. One part is to believe that there is an eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient God. The second part is to believe that that all-powerful, all-knowing God is interested in us and would keep His promises to us, personally and individually. First, Abraham believed the person of God, then he believed His promises. It is one thing to believe that there is God, but it another thing to believe that His words are true and that He will reward us as we diligently seek Him. We should be asking ourselves where we are at, with regards to our faith in God. Do we just believe that He exists, but we are finding it hard to accept that He wants to be involved in our lives and that He will reward us if we diligently seek Him? We need to believe, not just the person of God, but also His promises.

Our key text reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please God. We must believe who God is and what He says to be able to please Him. And what has He said to you and me? He says that Jesus Christ was crucified for our past transgression and was raised for our justification. He tells us that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has paid for our sins and that we are now joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We are righteous, not because we have kept all the laws but because we believe Him, and by that belief or faith, comes obedience. How wonderful to know that God remains the author and finisher of our salvation. We only need to trust in Him. I invite you one more time to put your trust in God for this life, and for eternity. He did not fail Abraham and He will not fail you. Remember, when He made that promise to Abraham, He had you in mind.