

Romans 4:1–8

1What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

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

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

4Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

6just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

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

8Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”

Sola Fide

Romans 4:1-8

On October 31, 1577, Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, nailed his 95 Theses for an academic debate on the Wittenberg chapel door and began the Protestant Reformation. This revival was identified by five Solas. These themes are important to us, not just because they were important to the Reformers. They are vital to us because they are and always were Biblical reality. (1) Scripture alone is our one authority before God. (2) Grace alone is the one way God saves us. (3) Today we will study the third sola, Sola Fide, Faith Alone.

We will just scratch the surface here. We will consider the Apostle Paul’s illustration of Faith Alone. Then we will discuss the content of justifying faith.

I. Justification Through Faith Illustrated (Romans. 1-8)

II. The Content of Justifying Faith (2 Corinthians 15:3-4)

I. Justification Through Faith Illustrated (Romans 1-8)

"What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 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 accounted to him for righteousness.'"(Romans 4:1-3)

A. To unpack Paul's teaching in Romans 3:22-31, the Apostle now turned to the father of the Jewish people. Citing the example of Abraham, Paul declared that even Abraham, whom the Jewish people believed was almost sinless, Paul wrote, *"For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God."* It was true the Jewish people believed Abraham to have an exemplary life, still all the good that Abraham did could not earn him a righteous standing before a holy God.

1. Paul supported this declaration in *verse 3*. *"For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'"* Paul underlined the point he made in *Romans 3:27*. *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith."*

2. Not even Abraham could point to himself and say, I am saved because I deserve it. No, Abraham, like everyone else who has ever become rightly related to the thrice Holy God, has come not by his works but through trusting God through faith.

B. Here is the principle. "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." Romans 4:4-5

C. This is the bottom-line issue. Whom does God declare righteous? God does not declare the one who is already righteous justified. How can God do this and be just? *Romans 3:23-26* told us. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."* Because Jesus died, condemned for

our sin, God is just (righteous) and at the same time can justify those who are not yet righteous.

II. The Content of Justifying Faith (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,”(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

A. If we are going to understand saving justifying faith, the faith through which we are saved by grace, we need to understand what the Bible says about the content of that faith.

1. *Romans 6:23* is a very familiar verse. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Biblical saving faith always has an object. It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have Him because we believe in Him.

2. Permit me to underline this with another Scripture from John’s summation at the end of *1 John 5:11-12*. *“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”* How do we possess the Son? John told us earlier in the chapter. *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5)* So first, the content of faith involves who Jesus is!

B. Second, faith involves what Jesus did. (*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*) *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”* Faith is all about who Jesus is, but it also contains what He has done.

1. *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”* Do not miss the “Who He Is” component to this statement. The title Christ encompasses all the Bible says about Who He is and why He came. He is the Son of God and He came *“to save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)* If He had not come and had not died, we would be lost.

2. Even more than that, *“He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”* Had He not risen we would not be saved. The resurrection was the Father’s amen to the Son’s propitiation.

What Does This Teach Us?

1. Faith alone saves us, not because we are somehow righteous and God responds by declaring us righteous because of who we are. No, no, a million times no. We are saved by grace because we do not deserve it, earn it or merit it in any way.
2. We are saved by faith that focuses upon Who Christ is. He is God the Son, fully divine, who became incarnate in human flesh.
3. Saving faith also contains what Christ did. He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.
4. This kind of faith is the means by which God saves us. This is the faith which ultimately changes us. *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”* (1 John 5:4–5)

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (1 John 5:11-12)

Do you have the Son?

405 My Faith Has Found a Resting Place