

# JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, NOT BY WORKS

ROMANS 4:1-8 JULY 12, 2020

- I. Introduction to Chapter 4: Examples from the Law and the Prophets that God Justifies the Ungodly by Faith and Not by Works
  - A. Key Points about Justification from Chapter 3:
    1. “By works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight” (3:20)
    2. Rather, we are “justified by his grace as a gift” (3:24)
    3. God is demonstrated to “be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (3:26)
    4. “One is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” (3:28)
  - B. The Question to Introduce Chapter 4: Is this justification by faith, not works, taught in the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament?
    1. “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it.” (3:21)
    2. “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.” (3:31)
- II. The Example of Abraham (4:1-5)
  - A. The Principle of Works: Works Earn Wages and Lead to Boasting (4:2, 4; 3:27; 6:23)
  - B. The Principle of Faith: Faith Receives the Gift of Righteousness and Does Not Lead to Boasting (4:3-5; Gen 15:6)
  - C. God Justifies the Ungodly! (4:5; 3:24-26; Prov 17:15; Exod 23:7)
- III. The Example of David (4:6-8)
  - A. David’s Sin and Repentance (1 Sam 11-12; Ps 51)
  - B. God Forgives David (4:7-8; Ps 32:1-5)
  - C. David as an Example of One Justified by Faith, Not by Works (4:6; 2:29; 3:4)

“The article of justification is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler, and the judge over all kinds of doctrines; it preserves and governs all Church doctrine and raises up our conscience before God. Without this article the world is utter death and darkness.” —Martin Luther

Speaking of the doctrine of justification by faith, Calvin writes, “Wherever the knowledge of it is taken away the glory of Christ is extinguished, religion abolished, the Church destroyed, and the hope of salvation utterly overthrown.” —John Calvin, *Reply to Cardinal Sadoletto*

WLC 70. What is justification? A. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

WCF 11.2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

Reflection and Application Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

1. How would you describe the faith of Abraham? Was exactly did Abraham believe? In whom did he put his trust?
2. Was Abraham justified by faith or by works? How do we know this?
3. What other examples of justification by faith do we find in the Old Testament?
4. How do we receive the free gift of justification? Although this is a free gift for us, what did it cost God?
5. How does the Christian gospel, which proclaims justification by faith alone, differ from other religions? Do you see the principle of faith or the principle of works in other religions?
6. How do we guard ourselves against falling into a “justification by works” mindset?