

## **Romans 4:13-25**

The heart of fallen man needs repeated and constant reminders about his sin-stricken condition by nature.

### **Summary**

**In Romans 4:13-25, Paul continues to address the universal sinfulness of humanity and the impossibility of justification for sinners by obedience to the law by emphasizing the all powerful nature of God's life giving verdict in our justification.**

#### **1. Contrasted Law and Gospel vv. 9-17**

Paul has taken great pains thus far in this letter to the Romans to demonstrate that salvation is not by works but by faith alone.

God imputed righteousness to Abraham by faith alone and David found salvation not in the accumulation of his good works but in the forgiveness of his sins. In addition, Paul explained that circumcision was not a means by which people were justified but that it was a sign and seal of the righteousness that Abraham had by faith (**Rom. 4:11**)

Paul continues to emphasize "faith alone" (**Rom 4:13**).

It was not through obedience that Abraham and his offspring received the promise ... but "through the righteousness that comes by faith."

Paul then highlights the antithesis between law and gospel (**Rom. 4:14-15**).

If a person can earn his salvation through obedience to the law, then there is no wrath, and faith in the promise of the gospel is unnecessary.

Paul states that "law brings about wrath" (**Rom 4:15**), and in the broader context **Rom. 1:18** the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Salvation rests on grace and therefore must come through faith in Christ (**Rom. 4:16**). This is why Paul says that the promised salvation comes to all who believe, both Jew and Gentile (**Rom 4:17**).

#### **2. Powerful Verdict vv. 18-25**

Paul further illustrates his point by drilling down into the life of Abraham (**4:18-19**). Humanly speaking, the prospects of becoming the father of many nations were an elusive dream, but with God all things are possible. Even though Abraham and Sarah were nearly dead, Abraham looked to the promise (**Rom. 4:20-21**). Abraham trusted that God could bring life out of death and deliver on His covenant promises (**Rom. 4:22**).

God looked on Abraham's trust and credited it to him as righteousness.

Abraham did not trust in his own good works but trusted in the promises of God.

Again, the overriding theme that Paul continues to press is that ungodliness and disobedience merit wrath, not life, whereas God's grace by faith alone brings life.

Abraham's justification was not ancient history; it was relevant in Paul's day and our own (**Rom. 4:23-25**).

Anyone who believes in Christ will receive the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Our salvation is secured not only by the life and death of Christ but also by His resurrection. Christ's resurrection means that God the Father accepted His sacrifice and that Christ conquered death. Christ's resurrection was the Father's reversal of the false verdict that had been passed over His Son and therefore, Christ's resurrection is intimately tied to our justification (**Rom. 1:4; 1 Tim. 3:16**).

### 3. Abiding Relevance

The nature of the gospel and its power explains why Paul was so adamant about setting law and gospel in stark contrast in his explanation of how God justifies us. Paul likens Abraham's justification to the very act of creation itself pointing us to the power of God's life-giving verdict and our utterly desperate state apart from it.

Many people may profess these truths but then practically deny them by the way they live. By nature, we are dead in trespasses and sins and only the Word of God that brings the life-giving verdict brings enables us to rise to newness of life.

Many people do not realize that the gospel of Jesus Christ comes chiefly through the preaching of God's Word.

All too often people find reasons and excuses for absenting themselves from corporate worship: They want to rest, sleep in, visit with friends or family, catch up on yard work, pursue some recreation or get a head start on the new work week.

Pastors, too, can exhibit a similar practical denial of the power of the gospel.

All too often preachers step into the pulpit to deliver smooth platitudes or moral advice rather than unashamedly proclaiming the power of God unto salvation.

### Baptist Catechism

Q. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation

Our reformed forefathers recognized the power of the preached Word and, the power of the gospel unto salvation.

If people in the pew and ministers in the pulpit absorbed what Paul has written here, we would all give greater attention to the preached Word of God.