

Morning Sermon August 2, 2015
“How Can We Stand Before God?” Romans 4

I. *Not by standing against Him, not by shaking our fist against Him –*

⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5)

³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, ... (Nahum 1:3 NKJ)
*Some mistake God's patience to be approval of or indifference to their sin or they make an even bigger mistake and misinterpret His patience into an imagination of His non-existence. Yet, they will not be able to stand against His wrath –*⁶ **Who can stand before His indignation? and who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire (Nahum 1:6 NKJ)**

II. *Not by our own good works, or by any imagined self-righteousness –*

1. *Abraham was not justified by works –*

A. *By grace and faith Abraham clearly walked with God. Speaking to Isaac (Abraham's promised son) God says –*

I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Genesis 26:3-5 NKJ)

Note, Abraham's obedience is the reason (at least one reason) for God's blessing Isaac and his descendants, but the verses above do not say Abraham was justified (before God) by perfect righteousness -

B. *Because of misinterpreting verses like Genesis 26:3-5, many of Paul's contemporaries believed Abraham was perfect –*

The Book of Jubilees (*circa* B.C. 100) says, “For Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life.”

The Prayer of Manasses, concluded that Abraham never had need of repentance: “Thou, therefore, O Lord, that art the God of the righteous, hast not appointed repentance unto the righteous, unto Abraham....”

R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Volume 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pages 48 & 662.
This kind of thinking, Abraham to be perfect and justified by works was what many in Jesus' day, notably the Pharisees, thought of themselves

–
¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' ¹³ "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' ¹⁴ "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:10-14 NKJ)

The thinking, “I am perfect, I am sinless;” kept (and still keeps) people from repenting, asking for forgiveness, or forgiving others, it leads to great ungodly PRIDE!

C. *Abraham, like everyone else, was born in sin, his history shows us a SINS –*

- *Twice he instructed his wife to lie and put her in highly compromised situations – Genesis 12:10-20 & 20*
- *Listening to Sarai, he took Hagar (Sarai's maid) to be his second wife and bare him a child – Genesis 16*

2. *More obviously David was not justified by works –*

⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." (Romans 4:7-8 NKJ)

Anyone who knows even a little about the Bible knows David was a sinner:

- A. *He committed adultery with Bathsheba – 2 Samuel 11*
- B. *He murdered her husband Uriah – 2 Samuel 11*
- C. *He was born in sin, like all of us, except Jesus – Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:10-11; :23; Hebrews 4:14-15*

⁶ **But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6 NKJ)**

III. Not by ritual or by nationality –

¹⁰ How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. ¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, ¹² and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised. ¹³ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Romans 4:10-13 NKJ)

1. *Abram was a believer and counted righteous before his circumcision –*

A. *Believer, counted righteous – Genesis 15:6*

B. *Circumcised – Genesis 17*

2. *Circumcision was a Covenant Sign, it pointed to more important realities:*

A. *Abraham's descendant Jesus Christ would bleed and die for believer's sins*

B. *Spiritual circumcision, repentance had to be of the heart – Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:9*

IV. Not by a false or fruitless faith –

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe-- and tremble! (James 2:19 NKJ)

V. Only with a true, living faith in Christ and in God -

1. *Abraham's faith for the future was accounted for righteousness –^{NKJ} Romans 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found 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 accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:1-3 NKJ)*

⁶ And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6 NKJ)

What did Abram believe God for? Genesis 15 tells us –

A. God as his Shield and Reward –

the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1 NKJ)

B. A multitude of children, descendants both natural and spiritual

– "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:5-6 NKJ)

C. Land -⁷ Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." (Genesis 15:7 NKJ)

2. David's faith for forgiveness was accounted for righteousness –

⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. ⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶ just 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; ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." (Romans 4:4-8 NKJ)

David had faith to kill Goliath, but more important he had faith to be forgiven –

God imputes / accounts righteousness to us –

049 λογίζομαι logizomai {log-id'-zom-ahee}

Meaning: 1) to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over 1a) to take into account, to make an account of 1a1) metaph. to pass to one's account, to impute *Forms of this word are used 11 times in Romans 4 It means we are considered, counted, reckoned to be righteous in God's sight, because we trust what Jesus did –*

Three Latin terms describe ingredients of saving faith:

1. *Notitia – content of faith, the things we believe*

2. *Assensus – is the conviction the things we believe are true*

3. *Fiducia – personal trust and reliance*

^{NKJ} Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1) ... ⁶ But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* (Hebrews 11:6 NKJ)

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