

Romans 4:9-12

Justification: The Condition and Confirmation Through Abraham

Romans chapter 4 verses 9 through 12.

- 9) *Is this blessedness therefore upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision? for we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.*
- 10) *How therefore was it credited? while being in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.*
- 11) *And he received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which was in the uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all the ones believing, through uncircumcision; that righteousness might be credited to them also:*
- 12) *And the father of circumcision to the ones not out of circumcision only, but to the ones also walking in the steps of faith of our father Abraham, which was in uncircumcision.*

We have studied in chapter 1 verse 18 through chapter 3 verse 20 the doctrine of condemnation. The word *condemnation* is a legal term, part of the justice system of Rome. And it has to do with having a sentence against someone. And so Paul, addressing the courts within the body of Christ, presents the fact that man is condemned. Every person is condemned, has a judgment against them from God: **For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God**, we saw in chapter 3. That is the summary statement.

Everybody has sinned and come short of the glory of God. But he spent a lot of time on the Hebrew or Jewish person because, again, as we mentioned the first hour they did not believe that they were lost. They did not believe they needed to be saved. And he went out of his way to show that the Gentile is convicted in his conscience, whereas the Jew is convicted through the law. But both must come to Christ the same way.

So at the end of chapter 3, verses 21 to 31 he introduces for us that the answer to this dilemma of being condemned is justification by faith. The word *justification* and the word *righteousness* are the same words. One is in legal form, the other is in religious form. Righteousness versus justification. It means *to be rightly lined up with God*. No sin. No blemish. To be rightly lined up with God. Not only him but through His court system we have to be lined up with God. We have to meet all the requirements of the court in order to be right or else we are guilty.

So he started off chapter 4 entitled The Proof of Justification by Faith. Last week we took verses 1 through 8 and he used two people in illustration. One is Abraham - that he presented as being from the ancestral descendancy. And (2) David from the royal descendancy. That through both of them, it was by faith. In verse 3 it says, **Abraham believed God**. That is a dynamic statement. It does not say, *he claimed the promises of His word*. It says, **He believed**

God and it was credited to him for righteousness. If a person works at a job, his wages are owed to him as a debt. But Abraham, in not working but believing upon the One who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

(Verse 6) **But David also describes the blessedness** - and that is what is carried over today - **of the man, to whom God credits righteousness apart from works,** (verse 7) **saying, Blessed are those whose lawlessnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.** (verse 8) **Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not credit sin.**

So as we continue on with the proof of justification, he now ministers about this blessed condition and he presents some facts to us.

First of all, the condition of Abraham in verses 9 and 10. (verse 9) **Is this blessedness therefore upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision?** or *uncircumcised*. So *circumcision* would be the Jews and the *uncircumcised* would be the Gentiles. So, this blessedness, is it upon the Jews? or also upon the Gentile? **For we just said** (up in verse 3) **for we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.** So was it just for the Jews or just for those people who become circumcised under the law? Or is it also for the people who are uncircumcised under the law?

He says, (verse 10) **How therefore was it credited? while being in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?** The answer? **Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.** That is the condition that he was in. This was approximately fourteen years before God gave the law or rule for circumcision. Abraham received the promise from God and Abraham says, "I believe it. I put my faith in you, God. You said it, that is good enough." He was still a Gentile. He was still uncircumcised and it was four hundred thirty years before the law even arrived. So you can see that Paul is bringing all their attention back to Abraham.

And you do not want to say this to an Orthodox Jew who is rejecting Jesus as Messiah but it is a good point. Did you know your father Abraham was a Gentile when God made the promise? Do you know he was uncircumcised when God made the promise? He was not Jewish. That is why he can be the father of all, because the physical descendancy of the Jews came through him but also the physical descendancies of the Gentiles came through him, Ishmael and Isaac. Two different children representing two different places.

That is why the underlying current in the Middle East, why there is so much trouble. It is because the Jews say, "We have the promise through Isaac," and the Syrians and Egyptians and all say, "We have the promise through Ishmael. Abraham is our father too." From descendancy that is true. But there are actually three different kinds of descendants that are mentioned in Scripture that come from Abraham: physical descendants, spiritual descendants, and Christ who is the seed, single seed, to whom the promises are made.

So the Hebrew and Jewish people in John chapter 8 they told Jesus, "We have Abraham as our father. Do not tell us we are in need of a Savior. We do not have to submit to You. Abraham is our father." Jesus said, "If Abraham were your father, you would believe in Me because he spoke of Me. You are not of Abraham, you are of your father the devil." Ouch. You

are a physical descendent from Abraham, but you are a spiritual descendent from Satan. He is your spiritual father, which is why both Jew and Gentile must receive Christ the same way to be saved. Same requirements for both Jew and Gentile because all have sin, Jew and Gentile alike.

So the condition of Abraham when he believed God and at that time it was credited to him for righteousness. Was he circumcised or uncircumcised? Uncircumcised. That is the condition he was in. Because the big hole for the Jews - not only are they descendants of Abraham, not only do they have the word of God, but they have been circumcised so they kept the law, so that means they are going to heaven.

But just like the Sabbath day, and I encourage you to take your concordance and search out the words *sign* in English in the Old Testament. Sign. Because the Old Testament tells us that the Sabbath day was given to the Jewish people as a sign. Specifically to the Jews.

Look what it says about circumcision: (verse 11) **And he received a sign of circumcision.** That is all it is, it is a sign. It does not provide salvation. You say, "Well, what is the purpose of circumcision?" Well, the Jews had to be circumcised in order to acknowledge and it was a sign that they were acknowledging that the Messiah was coming through the seed of the Jews. That is it. You are acknowledging something. It is a sign that the person believes Messiah is coming through the Jews. How does that save you? It does not. But it was a requirement for them to attest to the fact that they were looking for Messiah and that is why they were here.

He received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which was in uncircumcision. All of the promises and all the covenants made to Abraham was when he was a Gentile uncircumcised. Like I say, approximately fourteen years before circumcision was even a requirement, four hundred thirty years before the law was given.

There are some Hebrew and Jewish people today that have been confronted with those facts and the new approach is that when the law was given it took the place of the law and the covenant that God gave to Abraham. That is why Paul went out of his way to say in book of Galatians that when a covenant is made you cannot add to it to take away from it. A contract is a contract. And so four hundred thirty years later you cannot add that to the contract. Who says? It is illegal. But the law was given to drive us to the promise that was given four hundred thirty years earlier that is for both Jew and Gentile. It is a sign.

The Old Testament also teaches that the giving of the Sabbath is a sign. You get into the book of Hebrews, it will tell you that the sign that was fulfilled in the Sabbath day was Jesus Christ. He is our Sabbath.

We also see the contemplated result. (verse 11) **That he might be the father of all the ones believing, through uncircumcision; that righteousness might be credited to them also.** The contemplated result is that God, in His time, gave the promise to Abraham and he believed it by faith. And this is both for the Jew and the Greek, both for the circumcised and the uncircumcised. And purposely, when Abraham was uncircumcised and there were no Jews, there were no Hebrews involved. Purposely. If anybody were to religiously and legally claim a

privileged position - religiously, it would be the Gentiles not the Jews. Because Abraham is the father of our faith, and he was a Gentile, and he was uncircumcised. You guys came along later. But both Jew and Gentile must go back.

The promise given in Genesis chapter 12 verse 3, He told Abraham that in you all the families of the earth, of the earth, will be blessed. Those who bless you will be blessed, and those who curse you will be cursed. So even as early as Genesis chapter 12 verse 3 God had pronounced that the blessing through Abraham would be upon all the families of the earth. And so, God through Paul is not canceling out the Hebrew and Jewish people. He is putting everything in its proper place.

And you and I, we do not understand that either. We think the Hebrew or Jewish people are whatever we have learned in school or whatever they present themselves to be to us. It is instructing us as to what the proper function of the law is. What is the proper function of circumcision? Why would a Gentile have to be circumcised? Messiah has already come, God never told us that we needed to be.

Of course, we do not mess with circumcision, we try it with baptism. You can receive Christ but you have to be water baptized to be saved. How does that save you? Well, you know, it is obedience. No, it is water over flesh. Yes, we are to be water baptized as a testimony to the fact that we are saved and belong to Christ, but it does not save us. That is what Peter addressed in I Peter. He says it is not the water but rather the answer of a good conscience towards God. It is spiritual.

So what we are doing here is we are allowing Paul to put the Hebrew Jewish people and the law and all of their requirements in proper perspective. And for us Gentiles, we are pagan. Period. We are like the Heinz 57 dog variety - a mixture of everything. We bring all of our religious tradition and practices together and we channel them to Jesus Christ somehow, some way. It is mainly by our culture, mainly by our religious upbringing. But in reality, our problem is that we have not come out of our culture and we have not left all the world behind to follow Christ. We bring the pagan lifestyle and culture into the church because we cannot leave it.

And the Jews cannot leave the law. You see, there is a problem. The Jews are saying, "You need to keep the law because I cannot give it up. So you have to be like me." And the writer of Hebrews is saying, "Give it up. You do not need that anymore." All of that was a shadow of the One who is to come, He is now a person. It is not a ceremony anymore. It is not religious practice anymore because all of those things were a shadow pointing you to the One who is to come.

And for the Gentile we say, "Yeah! Gospel of grace. No law. Bring it in. Let us go!" Bring in our lifestyle and our culture. "Hey! our culture is Christian." And so, by taking these studies we are allowing God's word to put the Jewish person, the Hebrew person - they are God's chosen people, always will be. Not chosen to go to heaven, but they are chosen to represent God on the earth and they have rejected Him.

Romans chapter 11 says because they rejected Messiah God has drafted us Gentiles into the vine. We are doing what they should be doing, but they cannot because they rejected Him. And one of the reasons why God chose us to be grafted into the vine is so that the Hebrew people would see us with their Messiah and they will get jealous, and they will turn to Him. You see, it is still centered on them.

So, for you and I, being children of God and followers of Christ, God has grafted us in. We are in a position and a privilege that really, at the beginning, was not ours. They should be preaching to us. But since we are grafted in - we are grafted in in order to represent Christ to both the Jews and the Gentiles. That is what we are. We are representatives. We are ambassadors for Christ. We must be able to know and to share the truth of what that gospel is.

That is why we spend so much time in detail discussing each item because both the Jew and the Gentile do not understand what it means to be a Jew or Gentile. Most Christians believe and just know. "Well, I am not Jewish so I am Gentile." They do not know all the details. But the Hebrew people are wrong and we are wrong. The Hebrew people bring the law into the church; the Gentiles bring society and culture into the church. The elements of the world, if you will. And God is trying to get the Jews to break away from the legalism and get the Gentiles to break away from the paganism. **Come out from amongst them and be different.** So that they see a difference and they know a difference.

We will continue with this next week. Let's pray.