

## **Romans 4:22-25** **The Process of Justification**

This morning Romans chapter 4 verses 22 to 25. At verse 22 of Romans 4, **Therefore it was also credited to him for righteousness. But it was not written on account of him only that it was credited to him, but also on account of us, to whom it is about to be credited, to the ones believing upon the One having raised Jesus our Lord from out of *the* dead, who was delivered over on account of our trespasses, and was raised on account of our justification.**

In Romans chapter 4, and again let me remind you it is different than our study in Galatians. Galatians is ministering about justification and sanctification but in response to false teaching. The book of Romans is a - some consider it to be the best literature that has ever been written. In the book of Romans it is the doctrine of the Christian faith from beginning to end. Through it we can understand the things of the Christian faith.

And as you can see, we are just at the end of Romans 4. But it is interesting as we started Galatians 5 last hour, how much we in the body of Christ all of us, concerning all Christians, do not understand the Christian faith. I do not know how many times they have studied Romans or how many times they have studied Galatians - I know those in positions of ministry have, but I still do not understand why professing believers and leaders still do not understand the difference between faith and works. *Faith* is putting our trust in Jesus Christ to work. *Works* is not part of our vocabulary other than the product of what God does in our hearts and lives.

From Romans chapter 3 verse 21 all the way through to the end of chapter 5 we are discussing the doctrine of justification, after having studied the doctrine of condemnation. *Justification* as we mentioned to you the first hour, *justification* is righteousness imputed or given to our account, which equals a right relationship and standing with God. It is not something that is given to us, it is something that is put on our account. That I have met - at least my account shows that I have met all of the requirements of God, the requirements of His justice system. That is what *justified* means, to be right with God's holy law.

Now, I know I am not right but through Jesus Christ I have justification. It is His righteousness that is imputed (or given) to my account. And when He died on the cross He took all of my sins upon Him. Again, it is a matter of faith. I study what has been done for me and I study how God's Spirit draws me to Him to say, "Do you believe? Do you believe it? Can you trust Me that it has been provided for you? And can you trust Me that I am able to do it?" And as we continue to go through, we will also study that He gives us the faith to believe that.

Now in the Scriptures it teaches that you do not produce faith by works. If I have to produce the belief and the faith to believe something has been true then I have produced it out of my works. It is human. A faith that all of us live by every day. We like to transfer it into religious form to make us feel better about our standing with God. But basically we live by human faith all the time. Every time we get up in the morning and get dressed and get in the car we are saying that I am believing I am going to arrive at work okay. When we get on an airplane - even though some people do not like to fly and it is a little insecure and a little hesitant to trust

yourself to that thing that flies up in sky. It is kind of a helpless feeling but you still pack your bags. You believe you are going to make it. You do not have talk yourself into it. You know, if you do you do and if you do not you do not but I am packing my bags because I expect to arrive. That is human faith. And we take that human faith and we make religious systems out of it, so that I can practice it, and I can earn by merit my right standing with God. And Paul is teaching us that justification is not earned. If I am doing something out of religious works and human effort then God is indebted to me, He owes me. And if it is by works then I am doing something for God. Whereas by faith, trusting His grace He is doing something for me. All the time He is doing something for me. It is me coming to a standpoint of saying, "I cannot do it."

Do you know how many years it takes for a believer who knows the truth of God's word, how many years it takes to arrive at a point where all pride is set aside, and we have to say, "I cannot do it"? Or as Jesus said, **Without me you cannot do one thing**, spiritually. Now, we know that but we continue with our human effort to do things for Him. To do His work for Him. My heart goes out to believers today, we are caught in this last day's gospel message that says, "Jesus has saved you, now it is up to you to do something for Him." Now that make sense to our Gentile world. Our cultural background causes that to make sense to us.

Because you know the person that just stays at home, and stays in bed, and does not go get a job, I mean, you know, maybe the only thing that they do is they go check the mailbox to see if God has sent the Lotto check. By accident they might have won the Lotto and they can go back to bed. Well, you can only do that for so long before somebody is going to want their house payment. And you have to eat. And, you know, all these various things but we carry over this system of works into a religious system.

There are two forms or versions of Christianity mixed in amongst our culture and within all of our churches. Two forms of Christianity: one is by works and one is by faith. One violates the very question of Galatians chapter 3 verses 1 through 3 where Paul says, **When you were saved did you receive or believe by faith or by works?** No, I heard the gospel message and God's Spirit convicted me of my need of Christ and it was God's Spirit - literally Jesus saves. He saved me. I hesitate to use the phrase, "I got saved at a certain time by doing a certain thing." Now, that might be true that God saved you in spite of that but it was not because you did that. Does that make sense? Because I cannot tell everybody that if they walk down the aisle at my invitation, and they kneel at the altar, and they pray the sinner's prayer, they are going to be saved. I cannot give them that guarantee because the Bible does not give the guarantee. "Oh, but I prayed it and you know..." God has to save.

I am impressed more and more how the gospel was preached at Cornelius's house and before Peter even got through, in fact, right after he started the Holy Spirit fell on them and saved them. In our day and age Peter would have been bummed, "I did not even get to the altar call. I did not even get to explain the sinner's prayer and God saved them. What do you think of that?"

And the whole emphasis of the early church was on the work of God's Spirit. Remember when they had the good council in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 15, as they began to share how the Gentiles are being saved. It did not say, "They pray the same prayer we did. They joined the same religious system that we did." It is, **They received the same Spirit we did at the**

**beginning.** It is like, "Hey, if God saved them the same way He did us at the beginning, who are we to question God?" You see, when it is all put on Him, it is like, "You argue with Him." If it is all put on me then you can argue with me.

But we are being told today - and I am guilty of it, most of the ministry in the last forty-one to forty-two years has been the American culture way of doing things. Oh, we used to do terrible things. But we got results! Numbers. I can remember one church - because I started out as an evangelist. I started out preaching ten times a week - every night, three times on Sunday. We had a choir up here, and the auditorium out here full people. And so when it came time for the invitation, if you want to come up and receive Christ, and pray the sinner's prayer and receive Christ, just come on up during the invitation. And so, I would stand of course in front of the podium on the floor to receive anybody that would come down and want to pray the sinner's prayer.

Well one night, the auditorium was full, nobody is coming up, you at least get one. So I said, "Okay, stop the singing. We are drawing a line right here, right here at the front of the church. We are drawing a line right here. Right here at the front of the church we are drawing a line and everybody on that side of the line is rejecting Christ." Well, you should have seen the pictures and photographs that came out in the newsletter for that particular denomination. People were streaming up because they do not want to be over there. But it looked good. "Revival is taking place!" And all it was was just making them feel like, "I do not want to be over there, it makes me a nonbeliever." And then elders and ushers would be coming up grabbing people that they know or thought were not saved saying, "Do you want to pray the sinner's prayer?" And the people they knew were saved, just letting them come up.

Even in the Billy Graham Crusades, if you notice, even some of the film they show of the Crusades you see people with badges, either hung around their neck or they wear them on their lapel. They are the counselors - most of them are counselors but the others are there for a specific purpose. They are seated all over the coliseum or auditorium wherever the people are sitting. When he gives the invitation those people with the name tags they get up and come forward; so that people are not just sitting there like, "I want to go up but nobody is moving." All of a sudden people start coming up and it gives them the confidence to come up because other people are going up, who have been sitting around them. And some of the people with the nametags have been trained. You pick out a person coming up, here comes a man that does not have a nametag so he is not part of the part of the team. And you follow him, two or three feet in the back, and you stand behind him. And when he is praying with Billy Graham, and Billy Graham is through with the prayer he turns around, you are right there going, "Hi, let me show you..." So that all these people are trained for this. Now that is the American way of doing things. His organization is the one that put it out there for us, "This is how you get people saved."

But even Billy Graham lately said, "If I get to heaven and find five percent of all the people that came forward, if I find five percent in heaven I would be happy."

That crusade that I alluded to as far as statistics go, the Seattle Crusade, there were, I do not know, I cannot remember the number - five thousand or eight thousand people. In all the

evenings of preaching and revival a few thousand people came forward. And so the Gallup Poll people asked permission six months later to call all of those people - they filled out decision cards and they got a packet. Asked permission to call them and find out what their relationship with God is now that they have prayed the sinner's prayer, and they got their packet, and they are encouraged go to church. Less than one percent of all the people that came forward confessed to have anything to do with Jesus Christ. Most of them it was just, "I went forward, he is Billy Graham. He told me if I did this I would be saved, so I am saved."

"Well, what happened when you got saved?"

"I just repeated him."

"What have you been doing since? Been reading your Bible? Going to church?"

"No. But according to Billy Graham I am saved."

Less than one percent confessed to have experienced a born-again spiritual experience that we call and the Bible calls salvation.

Now when you count the thousands upon thousands of people that would fill a coliseum, and the millions of dollars it takes to rent it, and the millions of dollars, and that all the time and preparation to get ready for this monstrous thing, and of all the people that come forward, let us say eight thousand people come forward, less than one percent said they had a real spiritual experience of being born of the Spirit of Christ. What is more advantageous: a huge coliseum preaching event, or one-on-one with people just living out daily life? More people were probably saved that week, just Christians in that town and in that city just living their normal life. Than to go to all that effort and all that expense to make it look like and feel like it is a great work of God.

Now, I am not minimizing the less than one percent. I mean if they got saved, that is a great deal. I am talking about methods. They look good. The numbers make it look good. But in reality there are many people out there who even today are sitting in the churches thinking that they are saved and they are really not saved. And they find a church that says, "Okay, now that you belong to God, now that you put your faith in Jesus Christ, now here is what He wants you to do." And everything is based on motivating people to get things done. I put it that way because that is the way it is. "We have some buildings back here to build and since you put your trust in Jesus Christ, here is what He wants you to do. Today take your checkbook out...", you know. And you look around you. And, of course, there are people that have already been clued in in the church, and the elders and the deacons they are already taking their checkbooks out and they are writing the checks, so you feel like a fool if you do not write out a check. Motivating people to do things on the horizontal rather than just preaching the gospel.

What happens if you have a church of three thousand people and you start preaching the gospel? Instead of three thousand, you have thirty. "Oh, I must be a failure." No. Those are the people that God had for you. Cannot come unless God's Spirit draws you. And thirty people is more than enough to keep track of and to pastor.

We are in verses 22 to 25 of Romans chapter 4, we are studying the principles of justification. In verses 22 to 25 he finishes this part by sharing with us the process of justification by faith alone. I said it the first hour, I will say it again now. Justification is credited or imputed to a person's account by faith alone in Christ alone. Period. That is it.

And that process is given to us here. Verse 22, the conclusion of justification by faith. It says, **On account of which**, that is, Abraham and his example of faith, **it was also imputed or accounted to him for righteousness**. That is again, a reference to Genesis chapter 15 verses 5 and 6. God imputes the same justification for us today.

Listen to what it says in verse 23, the communication of the justification by faith. **And it was written not on account of him only, that it was imputed or credited to him, but also on account of us**. It is the same faith. Abraham is called the father of the faith, both of Jews and Gentiles. Because remember the argument up to this time is that when Abraham believed God and God's promise, Abraham was not even Jewish. He was still a pagan Gentile. Fourteen years before circumcision was even given. Four hundred thirty years before the law was even given. So Paul is pointing back to Abraham and says, "When he was in a condition of being uncircumcised, not a Jew, and did not have the law, he believed God." It is the same with all who believe. It is not through the works of a religious system. Not through the works of the law. When God told Abraham, "I promise that through your seed, through your son, Messiah will come," Abraham believed God.

We saw last time in Romans 4 that he believed that God had the power to do what He said He was going to do. Even later when both he and Sarah got so old in age that they could no longer produce children, they decided, "Well, we are the ones that blew it. God promised us so you go into Hagar and have relations with her and then she will bear the son and I guess what God is doing is He gave us the promise but we are supposed to do it." And after Ishmael was born God says, "That is not the son of promise, that is the son of works, human effort."

When God says He is going to do something He is going to do it, not us. But then Abraham had to consider his age, Sarah's age, the deadness of Sarah's womb, and the fact that his natural reproduction processes were now dead. Both. Beyond the years of ability to bear children. But it says, **Even then Abraham believed God**.

How about in chapter 22 when he takes Isaac who is now older. God says, "Take Isaac up on the mountain and sacrifice him to Me." I would have thrown a fit. I waited all these years for You to provide the promised son. I go through all that trouble and got in a big mess myself and then finally I trusted You to provide the son of promise, now You want me kill him. But Abraham did not see it that way. Abraham joyfully went about packing up the mules with the wood for the altar, and took his son. And Hebrews chapter 11 tells us that he believed God was able to raise the dead. "Well, if God wants me to sacrifice my son He is perfectly capable of raising him up from the dead." So off he went to obey God. But, of course, he did not have to kill his son because God says, "Now that I know that you obey My voice," and that God will provide Himself a sacrifice.

In Romans chapter 15 verse 14 it says all the things that happened to the children of Israel happened for our learning. And so now Paul says that what happened with Abraham and how he believed was written not on account of him only but for us. Who is the *us*?

Look at the condition for justification by faith. **To those who are about to be reckoned (or imputed), that is, those who are believing upon the One having raised up Jesus.** It is the one that believes, like Abraham. And it is interesting because this is a present tense. **To all of the ones who are continuously believing upon the one who raised up Jesus from the dead.** See, just like Abraham - he believed God could raise the dead. Therefore He believed God and went and made the sacrifice. And all of this, by the way, *the ones who believe upon the one who raised up Jesus*, is a paraphrase of Isaiah chapter 53 verse 12 in the Septuagint.

But notice it says - this is the fourth thing, the confirmation of justification by faith - **he raised up Jesus our Lord from out of the dead, 25 who (meaning Jesus) was delivered over on account of our trespasses.** So He did not die just to die a death. He went to the cross to bear our sins and that is what killed Him. Secondly, **and He was raised on account of our justification.** Let me say to you, Paul is teaching that the most important event that was accomplished by Jesus Christ is His resurrection. You say, "Well, wait a minute, I believe in the finished works of Jesus Christ. On the cross when He said, 'It is finished,' that that is it." Yes, but once He died and was buried and put in the tomb, had He stayed there that death would have meant nothing. He is dead. Where is our resurrection? If I am forgiven for my sins only in this earthly life and then I die and I do not rise from the dead and go be with God, what good does it do have my sins forgiven? There has to be a purpose to it.

The resurrection provided the proof of God's acceptance of the sacrifice of His Son. When God the Father raised Jesus from the dead it is God the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice of His Son for our sins. And that is the essential to the gospel. Salvation is trusting, not trying. Salvation is trusting that Jesus Christ provided all of the requirements of God's law for me. And once He fulfilled all of those requirements His righteousness was stamped, imputed, on my account and my sins were taken off of my account and put on the cross, on the Lord's account. I cannot add to that. What am I going to do? How can I add to it? The more I try to add to it, the more I take away from it. The more I do not live by faith the more I am saying Jesus Christ is not sufficient. It is actually in disobedience.

You can see that many of us in the pulpit, as you call it, are actually committing blasphemy. If Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation He is certainly sufficient for sanctification. The Bible says His Spirit keeps me for that day of salvation when my salvation is realized when He comes for me.

Ephesians chapter 1 verses 13 and 14 says that I am sealed by the Spirit of God and His Spirit is the guarantee that when Christ comes He is going to come for me. Now I have to trust Him. Salvation is trusting, not trying. It is faith, not works.

Let me say this closing as we get into chapter 5 for next week. Here is the difference between the teaching of Paul and the teaching of James. James says, "Faith without works is

dead." Paul says, "Works producing faith is dead." They are not contradictions. I do not produce faith, faith produces works in me.

As we continue in Galatians chapter 5 in the first hour, in those first six verses it is going to tell us that faith was energizing through love. You see, faith does the works. You start picking up on the language and realize that faith without works - it did not say, "me without faith." It is faith that does the works and that faith is given to me. Faith is a function and a fruit of God's Spirit, to trust Him. I cannot even trust Him without His Spirit giving me the faith.

Like the disciples said, **Lord I believe, help my unbelief.** There is nothing they can do believe more than what God gave them the ability to do. And that is a very honest, down to earth reality to come to the Lord and say, "Lord, help my unbelief by Your Spirit giving me the faith and the belief and be able to see and to be able to understand. Give me the ability to trust you because I cannot do it."

Like I say, multitudes of Christians go their entire lives, maybe being Christians forty, fifty, sixty years, and still have not got to the point where they say, "Okay, pride aside, human effort aside. I cannot do it. Without Christ I cannot do one thing. I cannot produce faith. I cannot produce love. If that is what God wants me to do, then He has to provide it." But you see how far we have gotten off in religion and church today? You go to church and they give you motivational messages on how you have to get to work. But it is all horizontal. It all has to do with the human realm. Nothing spiritual about it at all. Because we are into building empires. You know, if we do not build physically and in numbers, we are failing.

And if you read your Bible with an open mind you see that they had no place in the early church, in the Biblical church. It is no place in the Bible. If anything Jesus was not out to attract people, He was out to exclude them. Thousands of people followed Him, He told them the truth, and they left. That is success. When you have to compromise with the truth in order to build numbers, deceitfully thinking that when I stand before God, and I say, "I compromised with the gospel message but look at all the people that came!" How do we think are going to get away with anything? How do we think that He is going to be pleased?

And as we take our time going through Romans, and take our time going through Galatians, how do we get so far off when it is just taught in detail? Here is what the Christian faith is all about. It is not of works. It is our putting our trust in the Lord for Him to do His work in us and through us. It is very simple, right?

It is right there in the Bible. And it is presented to us an example by the book of Acts. What did they do to do the work of God? They had no idea what they were doing. God's Spirit came upon them. God's Spirit moved through them. God's Spirit used them at times they were not even ready for it. They had no idea what to do.

I love to keep bringing up that story of the prayer meeting. Peter is in jail. They are praying all week long round-the-clock, they have different people coming in. "Lord, please deliver Peter. He is in jail, we need you to intercede." You know, they are praying. All of a sudden, the angel allows Peter out and he comes and he knocks on the door where the prayer

meeting is taking place. And the young lady that answers the door, she looked out and saw it was Peter, runs back in and says, "It is Peter." They said, "It is impossible. Lord, we pray that You would deliver Peter. Would you leave us alone? We are praying." Now, how much faith is that? Zero. Right? If Peter walks in the room and they look up and go, "That is impossible. Lord, deliver him."

It reveals to us the human deficiency. It showed that God released Peter in spite of what they were doing and it brought them to believe, you see. It was not based on their belief or their unbelief. It was not based on them at all. It is based on the sovereign work of God performing His will and bringing everyone to believe once they see, and experience, and know the work of Christ.

Let's close with prayer.