

Justification and Faith

Romans, Part XXIII

Romans 4:16-22, Part Two

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I. Justification by Faith Alone

II. Abraham's Story (Heb 11:8-12, 17-19)

Abraham lived by _____. He believed that God would fulfill the promise He had originally given when he was 75 years old. For _____ years Abraham waited on the Lord to fulfill that promise.

III. Faith in God

¹⁶Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷(as it is written, "*I have made you a father of many nations*") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "*So shall your descendants be.*" ¹⁹And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. ²²And therefore "*it was accounted to him for righteousness.*"

A. What is Faith?

So what is faith? John Calvin offers some helpful distinctions:

"...faith perishes if our soul does not rest securely in the goodness of God. Faith is therefore not the mere acknowledgement of God or of His truth, nor is it even the simple persuasion that there is a God, and that His Word is truth, but is the sure knowledge of divine mercy which is conceived from the Gospel, and brings peace of conscience in the presence of God and repose" (John Calvin, 93).

1. *Notitia* – Knowledge (cf. Rom 1:32; Jas 2:19)

First, faith is *not the mere acknowledgement of God or of His truth*. While faith entails knowledge, mere knowledge is not sufficient for, as Wayne Grudem writes, "*people can know facts but rebel against them or dislike them*" (709).

2. *Assensus* – Assent (cf. Jn 3:1ff; Acts 26:27-28)

Second, neither is faith *the simple persuasion that there is a God, and that His word is truth*. Nicodemus knew that Jesus was from God, but he didn't trust in Jesus for salvation. He needed to be born again. _____ is not sufficient.

3. *Fiducia* - Trust

So what is saving faith? Saving faith is _____ in God's promise of forgiveness through Jesus' death and resurrection. By trusting in Christ, we can be restored to the *fellowship with God for which we were made*.

An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction
 - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
 - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
 - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live
 - A. God's Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. The Revelation of God's Righteousness (3:21-4:25)
 - C. The Triumph of God's Righteousness (5-8)
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith"
 - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
 - B. Patient not Proud (14-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
 - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
 - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

B. Who is God?

So who is this God in whom Abraham trusted and whom we are called to trust? God is He who *“gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did”* (17).

1. Gives life to the dead

First, the God in whom Abraham believed is the God *who gives life to the dead*. We believe *“in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead”* (4:24b). In principle, God did the same thing for Abraham and does the same thing for us. Abraham was, for all intents and purposes, _____ (4:19). His situation was hopeless. Yet God brings _____ to hopeless situations. He brings life to dead situations.

2. Call those things which do not exist as though they did (cf. Gen 1

Second, we believe in the God who *“calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”* God, in other words, is the Creator of all. He created the world *ex nihilo* in the beginning – out of nothing. And He continues to bring things into existence that aren’t there to this day.

IV. Strengthening Faith

Paul writes that Abraham *“was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God”* (20). Douglas Moo asks: *“In what way did Abraham’s faith ‘grow strong’? In the sense that anything gains strength in meeting and overcoming opposition - muscles when weights are raised; holiness when temptation is successfully resisted. So Abraham’s faith gained strength from its victory over the hindrance created by the conflict between God’s promise and the physical evidence.”* (Moo, 285-86)

A. Faith considers God not circumstances (18-19)

First, Abraham looked at a hopeless situation – he was 75 and had no children; his wife was barren and 65 years old – and saw _____. How? Because he considered God not his external circumstances.

B. Faith runs with God’s promises (20)

Second, Abraham didn’t halt and stumble in the presence of God’s promises, but welcomed them, believed them, and _____ with them. As Psalm 119:32 sings, *“I will _____ the way of your commandments, For You shall enlarge my heart.”*

C. Faith is fully convinced of God’s ability (21)

Finally, faith is fully convinced of God’s _____. Abraham was *“fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform”* (21). Abraham meditated deeply on who this God was in whom he believed.

V. Conclusion