

ROMANS

*A Daily Devotional
Study Guide*



LAKESHORE
FELLOWSHIP

WEEK 8

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Day 1

Study: Romans 4:1-8

Reading: Psalm 32:1-11, Matthew 20:1-16

Memory: Matthew 5:13

Several years ago, my wife and I started to feel burdened to do something to help other pastors and spiritual leaders. When we lived in Wisconsin, we built a room in our basement that we opened up for pastors and their families to stay with us. We were able to host a few pastors and their families, which brought us great joy and fulfillment. We then began to feel a burden for this type of ministry grow in our hearts and eventually God led us to Michigan where we built a whole guest house to offer as a gift to pastors and their families.

Today, we are going to see how God offers salvation to us as a gift. He doesn't owe us salvation, but chooses to give it to us because He loves us.

What Does the Bible Say?

The Jews had strayed away from the original purpose of the Law. One of the purposes of the Law was to draw the Jews closer to God as they saw their need to be forgiven of their sins. Many Jews thought that their works would earn them a spot in heaven and Paul spent much time in the book of Romans describing how man is not saved by the works they do. In chapter four he described how Abraham, who was the father of the Jewish nation, wasn't saved by works (vs 1).

If Abraham was saved by the things he did, then he would have every reason to be proud of himself and his faithfulness to God. If he could be good enough, he wouldn't need God. Paul knew that no one was good enough and used Genesis 15:6 to support this fact. Abraham was declared righteous because he believed in God and not because of the acts that he did (vs 2-3).

If a person could earn salvation because of his works, it would no longer be a gift by grace, but would be a wage that is due. The reasoning behind salvation by works simply says that God owes men for the works that they do for Him. This makes God a debtor to man rather than man a debtor to God (vs 4). On the other hand, the person who places his faith in

God without trying to work for his salvation is declared righteous by God because of His grace. This is the realization that God owes us nothing, but wants to give us everything (vs 5). Not only was Abraham proof of this fact, but David declared this fact in Psalm 32:1 & 2. He stated that the person who has his sins forgiven and covered by God is the person who is blessed. This is the man who trusts in God alone to forgive sins, realizing that he can't work off the sin debt that he owes (vs 6-8).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Have you come to grips with the realization that you owe a great debt to God? Have you realized that you aren't a good person and that you absolutely need God's forgiveness for your sin? When a person declares that he can earn salvation, he is in essence saying that God owes him something because of how good he has been. This is absolute pride because those who declare this fail to acknowledge who God really is. You need to realize that you have built up a great sin debt before God that can never be paid by what you do. You need to realize that God has given you a free gift that you can't earn and don't deserve. You need to understand that you can only be declared righteous by faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. If you have believed, you need to realize that your works don't earn favor with God, but are a way to say thanks to God. You don't have to live life trying to appease God, because He has already been appeased by the blood of Christ. You can live in the love and liberty that He gives those who desire to follow Him.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the gift of grace that He has given you.*
- * *Ask God to help you to live in the joy of grace each day.*
- * *Praise God because He owes nothing to men.*

Thought for the day

Day 2

Study: Romans 4:9-17

Reading: Hebrews 11:8-19, Galatians 3:6-18

Memory: Matthew 5:13

Several years ago, one of the girls who had grown up in the youth group when I was a youth pastor stopped at our home to pay my wife and I a visit. Most of her family were not believers and she had made some wrong decisions and had strayed away from the Lord. God had done a work in her heart and changed her life. She was active in her local church and growing in her faith. She told me that she is much closer to those in her local church and her friends who are believers than she was her family. She understood what it was like to be part of the family of God.

Today, we are going to see how all who believe and are following in the footsteps of Abraham are part of the promise of eternal life that God had given to him and all his descendants who believe.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul continued to use Abraham as an illustration of justification by faith. He asked whether Abraham was declared righteous before he was circumcised or after he was circumcised. Paul then answered his own question by declaring that Abraham wasn't made righteous by the outward act of circumcision, but was declared righteous by God while he was still uncircumcised (vs 9-10). The circumcision was just an outward sign that revealed his inward faith. This was evidence that all who have faith in God, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, will be declared righteous (vs 11). The example of faith that Abraham set wasn't exclusively for the Jews, but for all men. It didn't matter if a person was Jew or Gentile. If they believed, they would be declared righteous (vs 12).

The promise given to Abraham wasn't specifically to the Jew only, but was to all who believe (vs 13). If those who followed the Law without faith could be declared righteous, faith would be worthless and unnecessary (vs 14). The Law wasn't given so that people could try to earn their way to God, but it was given to reveal their sin before God. If there was no law, then people wouldn't realize how unholy they were and would have a

harder time seeing their need for a God to deliver them from the sin they commit (vs 15).

The promise of eternal life can't be fulfilled because a person keeps the Law. It can only be realized by those people who have faith in God and understand that they can only be declared righteous by the grace of God. Those who believe, whether Jew or Gentile, can be called children of Abraham because they follow after the same faith that Abraham expressed in God (vs 16). This is because it is God alone who can give life to the dead (all men are dead in their sins - Eph 2:1-3) and provide them with eternal life. Men can do nothing to earn this eternal life and can do nothing to deserve it (vs 17).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you sometimes think that your baptism, your good works or your church attendance will earn favor with God? The idea of justification by faith wasn't new in the New Testament, but was established from the beginning of time. There is no work that you can do that will please God or appease His need for holiness. There is no good work that a believer can do that will make God happy with them. God chooses to save us by grace and he chooses to love us as believers. You don't have to live each day wondering if you are good enough to make God happy because you can't be good enough. God chooses to love you whether you obey or not. When you understand what you have in salvation, you will realize that the good things you do for God aren't to impress Him, but are done to say "thank you" to Him for the salvation that He has given you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God because He chose to love you when you were unlovable.*
- * *Ask God to help you live a life full of thankfulness.*
- * *Praise God because He alone can give eternal life.*

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Romans 4:18-5:2

Reading: Psalm 16:1-11, I John 3:1-3

Memory: Matthew 5:13

Aworthy young man fell in love with the daughter of well-known theologian Jonathan Edwards and sought her hand in marriage, but Edwards knew that his daughter had a terrible temper that she couldn't control. In response to the young man's request, Edwards replied, "You can't have her." "But I love her," the young man replied. "You can't have her," said Edwards. "But she loves me," replied the young man. Again Edwards said, "You can't have her." "Why?" said the young man. "Because she is not worthy of you." "But," he asked, "she is a Christian, is she not?" "Yes, she is a Christian, but the grace of God can live with some people with whom no one else could ever live."

Today, we are going to see how God's grace (choice to love unlovable sinners) extends to all men.

What Does the Bible Say?

The hope that Abraham would have natural children was pretty much gone. He was nearing 100 years of age and his wife Sarah was almost 90. Though it seemed impossible, Abraham had faith in God and a confidence that God could do the impossible. He didn't turn aside from what he believed, but continued to serve and give praise to God for what He was doing in his life. He had confidence that God would be able to perform the task that He had promised to perform (vs 18-21).

It was this faith in God that caused Abraham to be declared righteous before God. It wasn't Abraham's works that saved him, but it was his belief in the promise of God (vs 22). In a similar way, it is not our works that make us righteous, but our belief in the promise of forgiveness that comes only from Jesus Christ. We must choose to believe that God did the impossible by sending His Son to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. It is that faith that will allow God to declare us righteous before Him as Christ's righteousness is applied to our sin account (vs 23-25).

Since we have been declared righteous because of the faith that we

expressed in Jesus Christ, we now have peace with God. We no longer have to face the wrath of God because his demands for righteousness have been satisfied by the blood of Christ (vs 1). This salvation came by grace, but grace wasn't limited to the moment of conversion. Grace extends to a believer throughout his life. Each day, we stand in grace knowing that we don't deserve our salvation or the blessings that God gives us. Each day we can realize that we don't have to constantly appease God because the righteousness of Christ has done that. We can live each day knowing that God loves us no matter what we do. This should cause us to give great glory and praise to God as we realize how His grace towards us is never ending (vs 2).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you understand and realize what it means to live by grace? Many believers understand what it means to be saved by faith, but they often don't understand how to live in grace. After they are saved, they feel a need to attend church, teach a class, or give up things of the world in order for God to be pleased with them. They try to win His favor by doing things for Him. Living by grace is opposite of this. It is choosing to serve God because you realize how much He loves you in spite of your sin. It is coming to the understanding that God chose to love and save you when you were a terrible sinner and God chooses to love and save you when you sin as a believer. Nothing you do will change the way He loves you. Under grace, you are free to serve God. When you truly understand who God is, you will want to serve Him out of a heart of love. When you serve out of love rather than out of obligation, your love for Him will grow and your ministry will be much more faithful and your service will last for a lifetime.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for giving you His grace.
- * Ask God to help you live in grace each day.

Thought for the day

Day 4

Study: Romans 4:1-8, Genesis 15:1-6, Romans 32:1-11

Reading: James 2:14-25

Memory: Matthew 5:13

Romans 4:1-8

Why do you think Paul brings up Abraham in this discussion (vs 1)?

***Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. The Jewish people looked to Abraham and revered him. By pointing out that Abraham was justified by faith, Paul is helping lay the foundation for the argument that all people need to be saved by faith.

What do you think Paul meant in verse 2?

What point did Paul use by quoting Genesis 15:6 (vs 3)?

What does a person get when he works (vs 4)?

How is salvation by faith different than a salvation by works (vs 5)?

****God does not owe salvation to any since no man can earn salvation. It is a gift from God that is only received by faith.*

Who else does Paul refer to when giving proof that salvation is by faith (vs 6)?

****In chapters 1-3, Paul quoted several different Old Testament passages to prove his points. Now, he takes his argumentation a step further and is no longer just quoting passages, but he is using names of some of the most revered men in Jewish history.*

In this quote from Psalm 32:1-2, what are three things that reveal a person is blessed (vs 7-8)?

- 1.
- 2.

3.

Genesis 15:1-6

What did God tell Abraham not to do (vs 1)? Why not?

Why was Abraham tempted to be afraid (vs 2-3)?

****God had given Abraham a promise to make him a great nation, but he and Sarah could not have children.*

What did God promise Abraham again (vs 4)?

Why does God often repeat His promises to us in many different ways throughout Scripture?

What did God say to confirm his promise (vs 5)?

What did Abraham do as a result of the promises that God had given him (vs 6)?

Psalm 32:1-11

Why is the forgiveness of sins such a blessing (vs 1-2)?

How did David feel when he lived under guilt and conviction (vs 3-4)?

What did David finally do about this conviction? How did God respond (vs 5)?

What did David encourage others to do (vs 6-7)?

What did David challenge his readers not to be (vs 8-9)?

What is the difference in the lives of those who experience forgiveness and those who don't (vs 10-11)?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 5

Study: Romans 4:9-15, Matthew 11:20-24

Reading: Genesis 22:1-19

Memory: Matthew 5:13

Romans 4:9-15

What blessing was Paul talking about in verse 9? - (see previous verses)

How did Abraham receive the righteousness of God (vs 9)?

When was Abraham declared righteous by God (vs 10)?

Why is this a powerful statement to the Jews who emphasized that a person needed to do outward works in order to be saved?

What was the sign of circumcision meant to be (vs 11)?

****This is very similar to the idea of baptism and even the arguments about baptism that occur today. Like circumcision, baptism was meant to be an outward sign of an inward faith. An action that declared that a person was making a choice to follow God.*

Who was Abraham the father of (vs 12)?

****Abraham was more than just the physical father of the Jewish nation. He was the spiritual father of all who would believe, whether they were Jew or Gentile.*

What had God made to Abraham (vs 13)? How would the promise come?

Why can't a person be saved both by faith and by works (vs 14)?

****If a person works to earn something, it is no longer a gift, but it is something that they deserve. God gave Abraham and gave us promises that we have to trust in by faith to see fulfilled. Yes, good works should be a part of the life of those who follow God as we will see in chapter 5, but*

good works do not take the part of faith.

What does an emphasis on the law bring about (vs 15)?

Why was the law needed (vs 15)?

****The Law showed a person their sin and their need for a Savior, but an emphasis on keeping the law would keep a person trapped in their sin. God's wrath would come upon those who kept the Law and did not have faith.*

Matthew 11:20-24

Why was Jesus declaring judgement on the cities (vs 20)?

****The cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were located close to each other on the north side of the sea of Galilee. Jesus did many of his miracles in and around these cities. Though they have seen many of His wonderful deeds, man of them did not have faith in Him.*

What cities did Jesus say would have repented if they had seen the works of Jesus?

****Tyre and Sidon were in Old Testament prophecies and considered incredibly wicked cities.*

What powerful statement did Jesus make in verse 22?

What cities did Jesus compare in verse 23?

What warning did Jesus give to all the religious people who lived in Capernaum?

****The cities Jesus was declaring judgment on were Jewish cities.*

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Day 6

Study: Romans 4:16-25, Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-12

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-12:3

Memory: Matthew 5:13

Romans 4:16-25

What depends on faith (vs 16)?

Who is salvation guaranteed to (vs 16)?

What does Paul use as proof that salvation extended beyond the Jews (vs 17)?

****Note the use of the word "nations" (plural) not "nation" (singular).*

What does God do (vs 17)?

How is faith summed up in verse 18?

Why would Abraham have reason to loose hope (vs 19)? Why didn't he?

What does verse 20 reveal about the faith of Abraham?

How do you think your faith can grow like Abraham's grew?

What made Abraham's faith so strong (vs 21)?

What was the result of Abraham's faith (vs 22)?

Why did Paul say the OT words "it was counted to him" were written (vs 23-24)?

How do we have the righteousness of God placed on our account (vs 24-25)?

Hebrews 11:1-3

How would you define faith in your own words (vs 1)?

Why was faith so important in the Old Testament (vs 2)?

What is understood by faith (vs 3)?

How does this support what we studied in Romans 1?

Hebrews 11:8-12

How did Abraham obey God (vs 8)?

Why was the faith that Abraham expressed not easy (vs 8)?

How did Abraham live (vs 9)?

How did Abraham live in this world (vs 10)?

How are you living with this type of faith?

How did God's direction to Abraham take faith on Sara's part (vs 11)?

What was the result of the faith of Abraham and Sarah (vs 12)?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 7

Reading: Romans 4:1-25

(Take time to read this passage again, letting the truths you have studied this week sink into your mind. You are encouraged to go online and read it through a few times in different versions.)

www.biblegateway.com

Bible Memory

Matthew 5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.