

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

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Reminder: Back to School sales are great places to stock up on stuff for shoe boxes.

### Reminder Summer Schedule

Wednesday August 18, no afternoon Bible Study,  
6:30pm Gordon Wright speaking

Wednesday August 25, no afternoon Bible study  
Church outing and Baptism starts at 4pm, come when you can.

Church will provide drinks, hot dogs and hamburgers. Bring chips, salads, desserts. More details to follow.

Wednesday September 1, rain date for Church outing, if needed

### August memory verse, Romans 3:10-11 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

<sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

Now what shall we say concerning Abraham the father, as pertaining to the flesh, what did he find? For if Abraham were justified by his works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God ([Rom 4:1-2](#)).

If it was Abraham's works that brought him justification, then Abraham could boast in his works. He could say, "I left my home, I left my family on the other side of the Euphrates River, and I journeyed not even knowing where I was going, just waiting for God to show me. And I was willing to offer my son." He could have boasted if he was justified by his works, but he could not have boasted in God; he would have had to have boasted in himself.

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

But what does the scripture say about Abraham? [It says,] Abraham believed God and it was [imputed or] counted unto him for righteousness ([Rom 4:3](#)).

Why? He just believed in God, that is what God accounted for righteousness.

Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt ([Rom 4:4](#)).

But God will never be a debtor to you; God will never owe you a thing. I am always a debtor to God, but God will never be a debtor to me. Now, if righteousness could come by works, then once I did those works God would owe me salvation. If it were of works, then it would be a debt. God owing me the rewards for my special effort and my work and my sacrifice and my commitment and all.

But it is by faith. It is through grace, God's grace that He gives to me.

But to him that worketh not, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness ([Rom 4:5](#)).

I love it because, you see, it opens the door for me. It keeps the door open for me. I can come to God at any time and expect God to bless me, though I may be a total failure as far as my spiritual walk is concerned. Because God blessed on the basis of His grace, not on the basis of my faithfulness to my devotions. "Chuck, you have been good this week, you have been faithful. You didn't yell at anyone on the freeway, special reward this week." No, not so. Do you know that some... I hesitate to say this, but some of the times of God's greatest blessings upon my life have been right after my greatest failures. Because I knew that I just had to cast myself on the grace of God. I knew I couldn't come in my own merit. I knew that I was just bankrupt and I experienced many times the greatest blessings of God upon my life after my greatest failures. We need to rid ourselves of the Santa Claus concept of God. Who brings good little boys all kinds of nice toys out of his big bag, but if you are a bad little boy you will get sticks. He is making out a list and he is checking it twice. He is going to find out who is naughty and nice. The nice ones are going to be rewarded the naughty ones nothing. And I carried that concept of God. No, God's blessings are given to me on the basis of His grace, that way it's always available.

The door is never shut. I can always come to God through faith on the basis of God's grace towards me. To him that works not, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. God looks at me tonight as righteous, because I am believing and do believe completely in the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for me in taking my sin and dying in my place. I believe that completely. God accounts that belief for righteousness. God looks at me and says, "Righteous, a righteous man." I accept that, I know me, I know my weaknesses, I know my failings, and that is why I have to cling to Jesus Christ. That is why I dare not stand in myself.

David described this blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works ([Rom 4:6](#)),

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

In [Psalm 32](#), David said,

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered ([Rom 4:7](#)).

The word *blessed* is literally, "Oh how happy are they" whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Now if you go back to that you find it very interesting. David talked about that period of time when he sought to hide his own sin. Now, the hand of God was so heavy on him and he became so dried up inside that it was like a drought in summer. His bones were weary, for day and night the hand of God was heavy upon his life, until he finally said, "I am going to confess my sins to the Lord." And God immediately forgave him all of his iniquity. "Oh how happy is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."

Then he went on even more daring to say,

Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity ([Rom 4:8](#)).

That is, the man to whom God has no list. God doesn't impute iniquity unto that man who is believing and trusting in Jesus Christ. What a beautiful position that is where God is not imputing iniquity to me, because of my faith. Now, I would not dare to say this unless it was said in the scriptures. I mean, this seems to be so presumptuous I wouldn't dare to utter it, but the scripture declares it, so I am only declaring what the scripture declares. Oh how happy I am that God accounts me righteous and does not account my iniquities against me because of my faith in Jesus Christ.

God accounts me righteous. Now comes this happiness,

this blessedness then upon only those who are circumcised, or upon those who are uncircumcised also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. But when was this reckoned? when he was circumcised, or when he was uncircumcised? ([Rom 4:9-10](#))

When you go back into the record you find that God said of Abraham, "His faith is accounted for righteousness," before he was circumcised. Therefore, this blessedness of having your sins forgiven, of not having God impute iniquity against you because of your faith in God and trust in God comes not from a physical rite of circumcision, but it came to Abraham before he was ever circumcised.

He received the sign of circumcision, which was the seal of that righteousness of the faith which he had even before he was circumcised: that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they be not circumcised; that their righteousness might be imputed unto them also ([Rom 4:11](#)):

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

God's righteousness imputed to all men who believe and the father of circumcision. He is the father of those who are not circumcised who believed and also,

The father of those who are circumcised who believed who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not made to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith ([Rom 4:12-13](#)).

God promised this to Abraham 400 years before He ever gave the law. It doesn't come by the law; it doesn't come by the rite of circumcision, which the Jew was trusting in these two things. But God gave it to Abraham before He ever gave the law, before He ever told Abraham to circumcise his sons, in order that it might be applicable to all men, regardless of race.

For they which are of the law be heirs ([Rom 4:14](#)),

If they only which are of the law are the heirs, then,

faith is made void, and the promise is nullified. Because the law works wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression ([Rom 4:14-15](#)).

Now you can only transgress the law if there is a law, if there is no law then how can you transgress it? So,

It is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure ([Rom 4:16](#))

Or be certain. It can never be certain if it was predicated upon me, or upon my works, or my efforts, or my faithfulness, or whatever. If it were predicated upon that, you would never be certain from day to day. I would never really know if I was saved. I may be saved today, but tomorrow I may blow it bad. If it was predicated upon my works in order that it might be certain, in order that it might be sure, God has established it then through grace and faith.

not to that only which is of the law, but to those who are of the faith of Abraham; who was the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) ([Rom 4:16-17](#))

Not just one the Jews.

before him whom he believed, even God, who makes alive the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were ([Rom 4:17](#)).

Now, this is an interesting aspect of God, and I like this. God said to Abraham before Isaac was ever conceived, "Through Sarah shall thy seed be called," and He spoke of

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

Isaac existing before he was ever born. He spoke of him as already existing before he was ever born. Now, God can do that because God lives in the eternal and in the eternal everything is now. God living in the eternal can speak of things as already existing that don't yet exist in the timeframe that we live in, because God living in the eternal sees them as though they already exist, because He knows they are going to exist, though we have not yet caught up to that timeframe. And so God can speak of things that are not as though they are because of living in the eternal.

Now, this is one of the difficulties that we, living in the timeframe, have in understanding God. There is tremendous difficulty in understanding the resurrection of the dead. When does it happen and so forth? The minute my soul and spirit leaves this body, I also then enter into the eternal timeless zone where everything is now. To help confuse the issue, Solomon in [Ecclesiastes 3:15](#) said, "And that which has been is now, and that which shall be has already been." We are talking about the eternal, no time zone. So that which has been is now, that which shall be has already been; today is tomorrow, and yesterday is today.

God, looking down on the procession of history, can see the entire scene at once in one view. He can see Adam sitting in the garden, and where Adam was 6000 years ago, I am tonight. I am tonight as I am moving in the procession, but God can still see the whole procession at once. He can see the glorious coming again of Jesus Christ, and He can see the Millennium reign, and He can see the whole thing because He is outside of time looking down and is not limited to the time frames.

Time hasn't come this far to me yet, but God living in the eternal, outside of time, sees the entire picture with one view. Thus, God speaks of things as existing, though in my timeframe they have not yet existed. For God sees them; He knows they are going to exist, because He is outside of the timeframe, and thus He speaks, and that is where prophecy comes in. God just speaking of what He is looking at what He can see. He is not bound by time.

Now our puny little finite minds cannot grasp this. I cannot think apart from time. I am bound in my thinking processes in time, and I cannot think apart from time. God can. God sees the whole; I see only the part. We see in part. We know in part. We prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect or complete has come, then these things which are in part will be done away. For we will know them even as we are known.

This interesting aspect about God is given to us here by Paul: God, who makes alive the dead. When God said to Abraham, "Take now your son your only son Isaac, and offer him as a sacrifice," Abraham by faith took his son and journeyed to the mountain. Abraham didn't know how God was going to do it, but Abraham knew that he was going to return to his servants with his son. "I and the lad will go and worship and will come again. We are going to go up and worship God and we are going to come again." Wait a minute, Abraham. You are going to offer him as a sacrifice. I know that, but God said, "Through Isaac shall thy seed be called." Isaac doesn't have any children yet so God has got a problem. Isaac has got to come back with me, because through Isaac the

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

seed is going to be called. Isaac has no children. God is going to have to raise him from the dead if necessary, because God has got to keep His word. Now that is God's problem, how He is going to keep His word. He told me to offer him as a sacrifice and I am going to do that. But, He has got to keep His word to me so He has got to raise Isaac from the dead if necessary. So you see, he was believing in the resurrection.

For three days Isaac was dead in the mind of Abraham as they were journeying, yet he believed there would be a resurrection. I am going to offer him as a sacrifice and God is going to raise him from the dead. Through faith, [Hebrews 11](#), Abraham offered Isaac, believing that God would, if necessary, raise him from the dead, because God said, "Through Isaac shall thy seed by called." That was where Abraham took this step of faith. A lot of people don't understand this. They say, "Oh, how could a man?" They get all shook over the story of Abraham because they don't know the entire scriptures. They don't realize the faith of Abraham. He knew that Isaac had to be alive to bear children. So, God, You've got a problem. It seems like it is an unsolvable problem, but that is not my problem, Lord, it is Your problem.

Isaac has got to come back with me. He has got to have children, because You told me, "Through Isaac shall the seed be called." God spoke of Isaac's seed before he ever had any children, because he knew he would have children. Abraham knew the word of God had to come to pass, and so he was willing to go ahead and sacrifice his son, because God has got to keep His word and Isaac has got to come back to life.

Belief in the resurrection.

So against hope he believed in hope ([Rom 4:18](#)),

Or against any understanding of how God could do it, yet he believed in God.

that he might become the father of many nations, according as it was spoken, So shall thy seed be. Not being weak in the faith, he didn't consider his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb ([Rom 4:18-19](#)):

The first key to Abraham's faith is not considering the human difficulties. And that is our first stumbling stone to faith is we are always considering the human difficulties. It is so interesting how that we are measuring our problems into categories of simple, difficult, impossible. But Abraham did not consider the human difficulty here that he was going to have a son when he was one hundred years old. The deadness of his own body or his own he didn't consider his own body now dead. He was probably impotent by this time. Nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. She had probably gone through the menopause. No problem, God said she is going to have a son. God's problem, not mine. He didn't consider these human aspects or difficulties. Secondly, he staggered not at the promise of God. "Well, I don't see how God can do that. Now I know God said He would, but I don't know if He means me."



## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

He staggered not at the promises of God; but being strong in the faith, he gave glory to God ([Rom 4:20](#));

"Thank you, Lord, for that son. Oh, Lord, I appreciate so much You doing this for Sarah. She's wanted a kid all her life, Lord. Oh, You're going to give her a boy. That's just really neat, Father. Lord, I thank You and I praise You." For you see,

he was fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to perform ([Rom 4:21](#)).

And I can't perform. I can't do it. I've tried for many years; I failed. But God is able to do it. God has promised that through Sarah I am going to have a son, so I know that God is able to perform His promise to me.

Four keys to faith: considering not the human difficulty, staggering not at the promise, but just taking the promise and praising the Lord and thanking God for the promise, knowing and being fully persuaded that God is able to do whatever He has promised.

Therefore his faith was imputed unto him for righteousness ([Rom 4:22](#)).

God said, "That is a righteous man. He believes my word. He trusts my word."

But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification ([Rom 4:24-25](#)).

So even if Abraham's faith was accounted for righteousness, so our faith in God who raised Jesus from the dead, who was crucified for our offenses but was raised again for our justification, our faith in Jesus, God accounts to us for righteous, and God looks upon that faith and declares that we are righteous.

Does that mean I can go out and do whatever I want? Live after my flesh, indulge in just any kind of thing I desire, because, after all, it's my faith that God counts for righteousness. In chapter five Paul gets into some of these foolish speculations that people often make and the tragic mistake that they make when they take grace and try to run with it. Into lasciviousness and use it as a cloak for their evil deeds. As we move into chapter 5, Paul will deal with the subject, "Shall we sin freely that grace might abound? Shall we just go ahead and can we just go ahead and live however we want after our flesh because of God's grace? Does that mean that it doesn't matter how I live?" If you quit the study tonight you can be in left field and left out. You better come back next Sunday and get the other side of the coin or you could be in deep, deep trouble. Don't take this and run with it yet. You have got to realize that he is talking to a special category of people who have been crucified with Christ. Who are reckoning the old man to be dead and are living now after the Spirit, the new life in the Spirit in the resurrected Christ.

## Commentary on Romans Chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 8.8.21

So you've got to get the rest of the story to get the balance, so see you next Sunday night as we balance things off.

I am amazed at God's love for me. I am amazed that Jesus Christ loves me so much that He was willing to take the penalty of my sin, He was willing to die in my place, He was willing to suffer the consequences for my guilt. I love Him, and I appreciate His love for me. Because of my love for Him, I want to live for Him, I want to serve Him. Because of my love for Him, I want to do only those things that are pleasing to Him. I don't want to do those things that will displease Him. I want to walk as He walked. I want to forgive as He forgave. I want to love as He loves. You see, the love of Christ constrains me, and thus, I live by a higher standard than any law could dictate, for I am bound by the law of love. Love for God and love for Jesus Christ that causes me to only desire to do those things that will bring glory to Him.

May you walk this week in such a way as to bring glory unto the Father that He may look upon you and be pleased as you express to Him your love through the life that you live. God bless you and give you a beautiful week walking with Jesus, filled with His Spirit.