

Romans
Just Like Abraham
Romans 4:23-25
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Well, I invite you to turn with me, for the last time, to Romans 4. Today, we complete the study of this magnificent chapter. Paul used, as we have been pointing out for several months now, this entire 4 chapter of Romans, to argue that his gospel which at its heart was justification by faith alone, that his gospel was in fact the very same gospel the Old Testament taught and the gospel that Abraham believed 4,000 years ago. To study this letter of Paul to the Romans and to deny justification by faith alone, is really to close your ears, to cover your eyes, and to bury your head under a rock because it permeates this letter. However, because it is in essence the gospel, it is the gospel, because of that Satan still continues his relentless attack on the clear biblical teaching of justification by faith alone. Today, his attack take many different forms but as we begin this morning, I just want to point out 3 common attacks that Satan makes on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone in our day.

First of all, he attacks it by denying justification by faith alone and encouraging people instead to put their confidence in their works, either in whole or in part, as a way to gain a right standing before God. This is works based righteousness, this is to say that you somehow can earn your way in to God's favor by your efforts, by your actions, by your deeds, by your merit, by your goodness. This is the lie taught by the Roman Catholic Church, it's the lie taught by those cults that attach themselves to Christianity; cults like the Jehovah's witnesses, like the Mormons. It is also the lie of all false religion. In this world there are only two religions. There is the religion of the New Testament gospel and the Old Testament gospel, the Word of God sets forth that we are made right with God solely by the work of Jesus Christ. And then there's one other religion and its the religion that says that either in whole or in part, you're made right with God by your own efforts. All false religion, ultimately lands here. And it is absolutely genius of Satan to do this.

A second attack on justification by faith alone is using justification as an excuse for sin. This is antinomianism. Sadly, this idea is very prevalent in our world. The idea that: "well, I can just glory in the cross and it does not matter how I live, I just need to glory in the cross and God will forgive me, it's OK." Listen, Paul absolutely hates this and sadly the fruit of this doctrine that's been very

prevalent in our era. The fruit of it is already come to fruition in the lives of some of its most vocal proponents and leaders. But Paul is going to address this issue. He already addressed the first one in great clarity in the first four chapters of this letter. He's going to address the second one using justification as an excuse for sin in chapter 6. Notice verse 1, "what shall we say then, are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we, who died to sin, still live in it." Paul is going to argue that along with justification, comes a radical change in our relationship to sin. And because of that we can't continue to live dominated by, under the control and slavery of, sin in our lives if we are truly been justified.

A third attack that Satan makes on the gospel today is redefining justification as something other than how an individual is made right with God. This has taken various forms throughout church history but in our day, it comes to us in what is called "The New Perspective On Paul."

This is a view that, in seed form, has been around for a while in the halls of academia with people like E.P. Sanders and James Dunn and others. But it has been championed and made popular by a British theologian by the name of N.T. Wright or Tom Wright. Wright argues that justification is not what we've been learning from Romans. He says, and he was quoted this way in Christianity Today, "Now, I'm taking a whole different approach to Paul's epistle to the Romans. We need to take a totally new perspective on what Paul actually said." And he argues that justification is the declaration that we have become covenant members that we are in, in a sense, the truth church and ultimate justification will occur only at the future judgment when God declares us to be right based, he says, "on the whole life lived."

He clearly implies that our works, will be the basis, at least in part, of our final justification. Confusing the Doctrine of Justification with the Doctrine of Sanctification and Regeneration like the Roman Catholic Church does.

The New Perspective is clearly an attack on the historic gospel and is a dangerous aberration. It is not orthodoxy, it is heterodoxy. Our Lord taught justification by faith alone and our Lord taught that justification is how an individual is made right with God. Turn with me to Luke 18, this paragraph deserves a series of sermons, maybe some point in the future I'll get a chance to do that. But I just want to call your attention to it briefly, Luke 18:9. "Jesus also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous" so here is self-righteousness, here is works righteousness, "and they viewed others with contempt; Two men went up into the temple to

pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector." If you looked at the Pharisee, he would have been the perfect poster child for external righteousness. He appeared to do everything that God required. He was respected, he was considered nobility, he was admired, he lived an outwardly pure and righteous life, he was everything you would want a religious person to be.

On the other hand, the Tax Collector was at the opposite end of the spectrum, socially. He was the worst you could get in that culture; he had bought in to a tax franchise from the Roman government. He was considered a traitor, taking money from his people, tax collectors were usually involved in extortion, and bribes, and thievery. They usually were accompanied by an assortment of the worst of characters, some people who were the enforcers, immoral women, the whole package. They weren't even allowed in the synagogues. They were wicked people. Now notice in Jesus' story, verse 11, "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'" He trusted in himself that he was righteous in his external acts of righteousness. "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his chest, saying, 'God...,'" and literally the Greek text says this, "God, be propitiated to me, the sinner."

Now, they were both there at the time of prayer, there were two times of prayer at the temple. There was a time of prayer at the time of the morning sacrifice, and there was a time at the evening, or late afternoon sacrifice. He is there at one of those times. And what he prays is "God let the sacrifice satisfy your wrath against my sin." That's really what he prays. "God be propitiated. May Your wrath, Your justice against my sin be satisfied in the sacrifice. Apply the sacrifice to me the sinner. Notice Jesus' verdict, verse 14: "I tell you; this man went to his house..." he left the temple mount justified. There's our word, declared right before God, that's what the word means, "rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." Now, again, this deserves a series of sermons but let me just show you that all of the elements of biblical justification we've seen in Romans 4 are here in this parable. There is a sinner who is totally without any good works by which he can be accepted before God. He has nothing. He is a beggar before God. And he is declared, according to Jesus, in a moment, he's declared before he gets home, he's declared to be right with God through repentance and faith that is expressed in his prayer. And the ground of his justification was solely the propitiatory sacrifice

that God had ordained. "God be propitiated to me." Let the sacrifice be applied to me so that you can forgive my sins.

Clearly, our Lord believed and taught justification by faith alone as Paul did. Now, let's go back to Romans 4. Just to remind you in Romans 3:21-26 Paul explained the doctrine of justification. In chapter 4, the entire chapter, he lays out a biblical defense of justification and he primarily seizes on one Old Testament passage; Genesis 15:6, to prove that the Old Testament teaches the same truth that was at the heart of his gospel, justification by faith alone. Now, specifically, he uses that biblical text about Abraham's justification to answer several key questions about our justification. We've looked at these, let me just remind you.

The first question is, on what basis are we made right with God? This is the issue he addresses in verses 1-8 and Paul's answer is that justification is not by human works but by God's grace. God justifies the ungodly, the one who doesn't deserve it.

Second question that he asked is: who can be right with God? And his answer comes in verses 9-12. The answer is this: justification is not for the Jews only but it is for Jews and Gentiles. In other words, justification by faith alone is God's universal solution to the sin problem. It's the only solution to your sin problem and to mine as well.

Thirdly, beginning in verse 13 and running down to the end of chapter 4, he asked the question; by what means are we made right with God? By what means? And Paul's answer is that justification is not by law but by faith and faith alone and he uses Abraham, what happen to Abraham proves, he says, that the only means by which we can justify before God is by faith alone.

Now, we've noted how he develops his argument in these verses, first of all, in verse 13, we see justification by faith alone stated. He simply says, this is how it is. And then in verses 14-16 we see justification by faith alone argued. He lays out a series of both negative and positive arguments to argue his case that this must be the sole means by which a man is made right with God.

Thirdly, we saw justification by faith alone illustrated. Beginning in verse 17 and running down to verse 22, he uses Abraham's faith and what is the most comprehensive view of what saving faith looks like, he walks us through Abraham's faith and says this is the kind of faith that justifies.

Now, today, we come to the conclusion of the chapter and to justification by faith alone applied. Justification by faith alone applied and we find this in verses 23-25. Let's read it together. Let me get a running start just to get the context, go back to verse 22; "...it was also credited to him as righteousness. Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." Now, in those verses, Paul explains why he spent an entire chapter essentially in an exposition of one Old Testament verse, Genesis 15:6. And that's a valid question, I mean, we might be sitting here today going, "I mean really? Why does it matter, what's the significance? After all, what possible relevance can one obscure verse from Genesis about the Jewish patriarch, Abraham, a man who lived 4,000 years ago, what possible relevance could that obscure passage have for me? And Paul wants us to know there has never been anything written that has more relevance to you than that verse.

Because God inspired Moses to write Genesis 15:6 for us. For you. God intended for Genesis 15:6 to show you how you can be made right with God in the same way that Abraham was. And if you've already believed, God had intended that Abraham's example, his justification, will give you great confidence, great encouragement because God will respond to you exactly as he responded to Abraham. Great assurance. Why? Well because what Paul wants us to see, and it's really at the heart of this passage, is that the essential elements of the Old Testament gospel that Abraham believed and the New Testament gospel that we believe, the essential elements, are identical. They're the same.

Let's look at it together. First of all, we are made right with God the same way, justification. We are made right with God the same way, justification. Look at verse 23, having just quoted in verse 22, Genesis 15, he says this "Now not for his sake only was it written that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also...." Now Paul is making a couple of points here, I think. In the larger view of what he's doing he's saying that the entire Old Testament can be legitimately applied to us. There are those today who would say that "if you look at the Old Testament, to discover about anything but the predictions about Christ and His coming; if you try to learn lessons about the Old Testament, you're moralizing the Old Testament and of course, that can be done. But there is a legitimate way to apply the Old Testament. Paul absolutely believe this, turn over to Chapter 15:4,

"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction...: believers, New Testament era; "so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

The Scriptures, even the Old Testament, as we call it, provides for us, New Testament believers, instruction. It teaches us endurance, how to stay with our commitment to the Lord. It teaches us to have hope. Notice exactly how he says it that through perseverance, through endurance that we develop, and the encouragement of the Scriptures, that is encouragement to endure, encouragement to believe what the Scripture teach; the result of that is we develop hope and of course, as we've discovered, hope does is not, "well, I hope that happens..." No, in biblical terms, there's a certain anticipation of what we are assured will happen. It builds hope.

Go to 1 Corinthians 10. Paul makes another point here of the same kind. In context he's talking about the wilderness wanderings and specifically how the Israelites push their liberty to the edge and fell off. He's dealing with Christian liberty and he makes this point in 1 Corinthians 10:11 "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." In other words, we're in the era of the Messiah, He's come and those things were written for our instruction. Of course, 2 Timothy 3 makes the same point, "All Scripture breathe out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped. So, it's OK to apply the Old Testament scriptures. Now, let's admit that the legitimate application of the Old Testament requires great skill and wisdom and it is often abused in its application. Agreed, it is often moralized and spiritualized. If you're interested and you want to learn some of the guidelines for interpreting the Scriptures including the Old Testament, go to the series online that I preached called "Bible Study For Every Christian" where we talked about some of the principles of interpretation and application.

So, Paul is saying the entire Old Testament can be applied but he's also saying more. He's also saying, specifically, Genesis 15:6 and Abraham's justification can be legitimately applied to us. In other words, we learned how to be saved from the Old Testament. This is what Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:15, the end of the verse that comes right before that famous passage, remember he says to Timothy, "From childhood you have known the sacred writings." He's talking about the Hebrew Scriptures, or what we call the Old Testament, and he says this, "... which are able to give you the

wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The Old Testament teaches the way to be right with God just as surely and truly as the New Testament. In fact, what does Paul do in Romans, he starts out in chapter 1, saying "I'm going to talk about the gospel" and he goes back in verse 17 of chapter 1 and quotes Habakkuk, "the just shall live by faith" and then he goes to chapter 3:21 and he says "the law and the prophets, the entire Old Testament, talk about this way of being made right with God."

He gets to chapter 4 and he cites what Moses wrote about the story of Abraham in Genesis 15. In other words, both Abraham and Moses believe this was the way of salvation and then in chapter 4:6-8 he quotes David from the Psalms and says "this is what David believe." So, understand then, Paul is saying that we can legitimately apply the Old Testament's instruction about salvation to us, but, listen carefully, Paul is saying much more here than that the Old Testament and Genesis 15:6 can be legitimately applied to us. He's saying that but he's saying more. Look again in how he says it. Verse 23, Now, not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but it was written for our sake also. Paul is saying that the reason Genesis 15:6 was written and he's not talking about Moses' reason for writing. He's talking about God's reason for writing. When God the Holy Spirit inspired Genesis 15:6, He was thinking about New Testament Christians. He was thinking about those who would hear the gospel in the New Testament era. He was thinking about you. Paul says God wanted you to benefit from the fact that righteousness was credited to Abraham.

I love the way Charles Hodge, one of the eminent commentators on Romans, puts it. He says "the record concerning the faith and consequent justification of Abraham was not made with the simple intention of giving a correct history." It is not just a history lesson. It had a much higher purpose. Abraham was a representative person. The method in which he was justified is the method in which other sinners must be justified. That he was justified by faith is recorded in Scriptures..." listen to this, "... to be a perpetual testimony as to the true method of justification before God." You see what Paul is saying? He's saying the only way that you will ever be right with God, only way, is the same way Abraham was 4,000 years ago and God had Moses write it to make that very point to you.

It's the only way. It's always been the only way. God must give you righteousness as a gift of His grace that you receive by faith. He must credit it to your account even though it is not yours just

as He did with Abraham. So we are made right with God the same way Abraham was. Through justification.

Now, secondly, we are justified by the same means as Abraham was. Faith alone. We begin at verse 24, "Now not for his sake only was it written that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckon....," this is us, "to whom it will be reckon as those who believe in Him..." Stop there for a moment. Genesis 15:6 was written to make it clear that if you are willing to believe in the Redeemer as Abraham did, then God will credit righteousness to you as He credited to Abraham. Now, notice he uses the future tense, "it will be reckoned." that was not implying that the Roman Christians had not been justified. The exact wording that he uses implies that this is God's standard operating procedure. This is how God always acts. God will respond to every believing sinner the same way He responded to Abraham and his faith. He will credit righteousness to him or to her.

The example of Abraham, as he spent most of chapter 4 showing us, is that justification is received by faith alone. This is what Romans teaches, go back to chapter 3:22, as he introduces the gospel, justification. He says, "I'm talking about," verse 22, "the righteousness of God which comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe. Go down to verse 28, for we maintain that a man is declared right with God, or is justified, by faith apart from the works of the law. It's not what you do. It's by believing in the promises that God has made in the gospel.

Now go back to chapter 4:24, Paul says the only way that we can receive the gift of the right standing before God and His law is by believing God's gracious promises in the gospel. They came through Jesus and notice, by the way, this is God's promise. It will be credited. That's a promise. If you believe in the Redeemer as Abraham believed in the Redeemer, it will be credited to you as it was credited to him. So, we are justified by the same means as Abraham was. By faith alone. I won't spend any more time there since we spend so much time through this chapter discovering that.

Thirdly, we believe in the same God. Yahweh. The God of Abraham. Again notice verse 24, it will be credited to us as those who believe in Him who raise Jesus our Lord from the dead. Now first of all, just take that expression; "the One who raise Jesus from the dead." Scripture often speaks of the Father as the One who raise Jesus from the dead. Of course, in other places, it speaks of Jesus raising Himself. Jesus said, "I laid down My life, I take it up again." Both are true, the Trinity

was all involve in the work of redemption. But Paul's point here is that the believer's faith is in the same God as Abraham's faith was in. The only One who was able to bring life out of death. The God whom Abraham believed is the same God who raise Jesus our Lord from the dead. You remember how Abraham thought of God, when he heard God's promise that he, at 99 years old and his wife at 99, are going to have a child. He considered the deadness of his own body or almost dead and the deadness of Sarah's womb, how did he think of God in response? Look at verse 17. God's the one who gives life to the dead. In his case, God brought life to their bodies, to enable his son Isaac to be born, from whom would come the Messiah, the Redeemer.

In our case, we believe in the One who raise the Messiah, Himself, from the dead. He's the same God. In fact, this is very clear in the Hebrews, if you turn back to Genesis 15, you don't need to turn there, but in Genesis 15:6 the verse Paul quotes here, in Hebrew it says this, "He believed in Yahweh." He believed in the One who is the I AM. He believed in Him and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. That was the God in whom Abraham believed and it's the same God in whom we believe.

Our God is exactly the same God. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He's the God who revealed Himself in Old Testament times as Yahweh. The One who simply Is. He's the God who revealed Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The God who revealed in the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, go back to Romans 1. This is how Paul begins this letter, Romans 1:1 he says, I am set apart for the gospel of God, that is the good news that has its source in God, the announcement, the invitation that comes from God. And notice, "this gospel," verse 2 is that which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. He's talking about the Jewish Scriptures. It's the same God. The object of New Testament faith is the same as that of Abraham. We believe in Him in whom Abraham believed, but now, He has a new description of His being. He is the One who raise Jesus our Lord from the dead, as well. Douglas Moo writes, "not only is our faith of the same nature as Abraham's, it ultimately has as its object the same God."

Number 4, we have the same Redeemer, the promised Messiah. The same Redeemer, the promised Messiah. Again, verse 24 he says, "righteousness will be credited to us as those who believe in him," that is God the Father, "who raised," notice this "Jesus our Lord from the dead." Who is Paul talking about? Well, this is kind of shorthand here, he doesn't explain because he has already

explained who this is. Go back again to Chapter 1:1 "Paul a slave of" literally "Christos Iesous." Iesous is Jesus' historical name. Jesus of Nazareth, that's who we are talking about. Christos is not another name for Jesus. It is not like His middle name or His given name. It is a title. It means the anointed one. It is in Greek what "Hamashiach," the Messiah, is in Hebrew. So in verse 1 he says I'm a slave of Messiah Jesus. Now notice how he described this in verse 3. The gospel is about this Person. It is concerning the Son of God. There's Jesus the Messiah's divinity, His deity, He is God's Son in a unique way and here's His humanity, He was born a descendant of David according to the flesh. That also qualifies Him to be the Messiah and verse 4 He was declared the Son of God, that is, He was announced to be, His claim to be the Son of God was vindicated with power by His resurrection from the dead.

You see, Jesus staked everything He says and everything He taught on the resurrection. In John 2 at the beginning of His ministry they said "by what authority do you do these things?" What did Jesus say? "Here's My authority, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." And He was talking about the temple of His body, John says. So, Jesus' authority was staked on His resurrection. He basically said this: Look, if you ever find My body, buried in some forgotten tomb in the Middle East, then don't believe a thing I said and don't believe a thing I did. It's worthless. But if I am raised from the dead, then I am everything I claimed and believe everything I taught.

Notice, Paul then refers to Jesus having made the point that both the death and the resurrection are both integral to the gospel, Paul refers to Jesus at the end of verse 4 as, "Jesus" there's His historical name Jesus of Nazareth, "Christ" Messiah, He's the one promised by the Old Testament that would come, the Redeemer, "our Lord." For Paul, "Lord" includes both Jesus' universal rule over all things and His rule over individual believer's lives. He is their Master, our Master. Now, go back to chapter 4. When Paul in verse 24 refers to Jesus our Lord, that's who he is talking about. This is shorthand to take us back to what he's already said. Jesus of Nazareth, who is both the Messiah, the Jewish Messiah promised in the Old Testament and the Lord of everything and of His people.

Now, Abraham anticipated the Messiah. He anticipated the Redeemer who would come. Several weeks ago we looked at Genesis 22:17-18 where God told Abraham that one of His descendants through Isaac would be the Messiah, would be the One expected. He would be the One who would possess the gates of His enemies. And so Abraham lived in anticipation of the Redeemer through Whom he would receive the spiritual blessing of forgiveness and justification. If you doubt that,

listen to the words of our Lord Himself, turn over to John 8. I quoted this passage several times over the last few weeks. I want you to see it in its context. John 8:31 "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him," by the way, some of these were genuine believers, others of them were not. There was a sort of tacit agreement but no willingness to really follow Him. And so Jesus said this, verse 31, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;" Here is a great test. You made a profession of faith in Christ? Well, here's the test, do you continue in His word? If not, you're not a true Christian. But true Christians continue in His word and proved to be truly disciples. Verse 32, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." This verse is most often quoted out of context. In context, Jesus is saying, you will know the truth about Me and what I have done and accomplished and you will be spiritually set free as a result. Verse 33, "They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone;" first clear evidence of revisionist history, "how is it that You say, 'You will become free'? Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

Listen, if you're here this morning and you're living in a pattern of unrepentant sin, you're not free. You think you're free. Jesus said you're a slave. You're a slave to that sin and if you doubt that, just try over a period of time to stop. You're a slave. But, verse 36, "if the Son makes you spiritually free, you will be free indeed of the slavery, the guilt and the slavery and dominion of sin." Jesus says "listen, I know you're Abraham's physical descendants, yet you seek to kill Me because My word has no place in you." And He said, "that's not what Abraham did." Verse 39 "you say Abraham is your father, then if you're his children, do the deeds of Abraham. Receive the truth. Abraham did." Now, With that context, go down to verse 51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death. The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'" In other words, You're saying that You and Your followers will never experience death, how righteous must You be? You must be saying You are more righteous than Abraham and the prophets because they all died. I love what they say at the end of verse 53, "whom do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus said, ""If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word."

Now, watch verse 56, ""Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day," the day of the Messiah, "and he saw it and was glad." Listen, Abraham did not understand everything you and I understand about who the Redeemer would be but he knew there was a Redeemer coming, it would be his seed, singular; one of his descendants who would be the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Deliverer from sin. He didn't understand how or how that will unfold but Jesus point here in verse 56 is that He Himself is the Redeemer in whom Abraham believed. You cant find salvation anywhere else only in one Person, the Person Abraham find salvation in, the anticipation of the coming Redeemer and for us looking back at the Redeemer who has come. There is only one Mediator, there is only one Savior, there is only one Name given among men whereby we must be saved. It is Jesus Christ our Lord. You will never be right with God in in any way but in and through Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except by Him.

Number 5, we are justified in the same basis. The work of the Redeemer alone. Look at verse 25, He who was delivered up because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification. Hodge says this is a comprehensive statement of the gospel. It is a solemn conclusion not only the chapter 4 but the entire first section of Paul's letter. He who was delivered up because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification. You know Abraham understood that the Redeemer would come and he understood even based on Genesis 3:15, told to Adam, that the Redeemer would deal with sin in an ultimate final way. And I think Abraham suspected, this is speculation on my part, I think he suspected that the work of the Redeemer would somehow be tied to sacrifice because he made sacrifices all the time. He understood that from the earliest. But it didn't really become clear how the Messiah would deal with sin, what the work of the Messiah would be until 700 years before Christ.

Thirteen hundred years after Abraham, the prophet Isaiah would write his prophecy and he would show us exactly how it was the Messiah would deal with sin. Go back to Isaiah 53. One of the most familiar passages in Scripture. Isaiah 53, here's how the Messiah will deal with sin, by the way, this is clear who he's talking about in chapter 7 verse 14 he says it's going to be one born of a virgin in chapter 9 verse 6 he says He's going to be One who is God, who bears the names of God, who does the work of God, who will reign forever. And then there is these 4 servant songs that talk about the Messiah and His work. This is the fourth and final of those songs and notice how Isaiah puts it, the work of the Redeemer, again, familiar words but try to understand the impact

of these words. How will the Messiah, the coming One, the Redeemer; deal with human sin, verse 5, "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our acts of moral twistedness, the chastening for our shalom, for our peace with God fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way but the Lord has caused the guilt of us all, literally, to strike Him." Look at verse 8, the middle of the verse, "...as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?" Notice verse 10, "But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief;" why to what end? Look at the next phrase, "If He would render Himself as a guilt offering," there is the reason for the death of Christ and every Jewish person understood exactly what that meant. The Messiah would deal with human sin by rendering Himself a guilt offering. He would sacrifice Himself, He would die as the innocent substitute in the place of the guilty.

By the way, the resurrection is implied in this chapter as well. Notice verse 10, "If He would render Himself as a guilt offering," what has to happen to a guilt offering? He has to die. If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He has to die but He'll live, He'll see His offspring, He'll see His seed, "He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand." The resurrection is also implied in verse 12, "Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the spoil, the booty, with the strong;" why? "Because He poured out Himself to death," so He dies but then He splits the rewards of His suffering. He enjoys the rewards of His suffering. He lives.

Now it's interesting in the Septuagint, in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the wording in verse 12 is almost identical to Romans 4:25. Let's go back there. Romans 4. And let's see the work of the Redeemer, we're given the work of the Redeemer in two statements. First of all verse 25, "Jesus our Lord who was delivered up because of our transgressions," the verb "delivered up" is often used in the gospels of Judas' betrayal of Jesus. But that can't be what Paul means here because Judas didn't betray Jesus because of our transgressions. No, Paul means something entirely different. He makes it clearer over in chapter 8 verse 32, speaking of God, "He who did not spare His own Son," here it is, same word, "but delivered Him over for us all," it was God who delivered Him up for our transgressions. Transgressions, a word which means offenses against God. Our acts of rebellion, our violations of His law. God delivered Him over to death for our

transgressions. Why? Go back to chapter 3 Paul already explained this. Chapter 3 verse 24, he says we're justified through the redemption, through the work of the Messiah, Jesus, and specifically what were, verse 25, God publicly displayed Him, that's the cross. What was God doing on the cross? He publicly displayed Jesus as a propitiation, a word which means the satisfaction of God's justice.

So on the cross, God made Christ a guilt offering and He satisfied His justice against the sins, the transgressions, of those who will believe in Jesus so that He could forgive our sins. Because God can only forgive in His justice and holiness where the penalty is exacted. He can't just be unjust and let it go unpunished. God delivered Jesus over to death, to the death of a sacrifice, a guilt offering, an innocent substitute, dying in the place of the guilty to satisfy the demands of His justice. Christ volunteered, but the Father delivered Him up for us all. Our transgressions, 1 Peter 2:24, "He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree," think about that for a moment. If you're in Christ, He bore your sins, plural, every sin you will ever commit was credited to Jesus and on the cross He bore them all.

He was delivered up because of our transgressions. And then Paul says in verse 25, He was not only delivered up because of our transgressions but He was raised because of our justification. Clearly Paul means to say that Jesus' resurrection was necessary to secure our justification but don't misunderstand him, he doesn't mean that it was only Jesus' resurrection that secured our justification because elsewhere he says Jesus' death did it. For example in chapter 5:9 he says we are justified by His blood that is by His death. The question then is what exactly is the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus and our justification? There are two and these are huge. If you don't jot anything else down, jot these down. Here's the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus and our justification:

Number one, the resurrection prove that the Father had accepted Jesus' sacrifice for sin. This is the point Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 15 where he's arguing about the importance of the resurrection, he says in verse 17 of that chapter, if Christ have not been raised, you are still in your sins. You say, "wait a minute, when Jesus died right before His death, He yelled out with a loud voice, 'It is finished.'" It's true, but if the Father had not raised Jesus from the dead, it would have been the Father's public proclamation "It is not finished." But when the Father raised Jesus from the dead,

He was making it clear, He was adding His own, "it is finished," to the work of Jesus Christ." Lloyd-Jones says "the resurrection is the proclamation of the fact that God is fully and completely satisfied with the work that His Son did upon the cross." He is fully propitiated, sin is fully expiated, we have been bought with a price, we are redeemed, the work is finished, the work is over, and the resurrection was God's stamp of approval on the work of Jesus Christ. It was the Father's way to add His words to the Son's and say "It is finished!"

Secondly, the resurrection also guarantees the continual application of Jesus' work to the sinner who believes in Him. Look at chapter 8:34, having explained justification, he says in verse 34, "who is the one who condemns?" Who can condemn you when God has justified you? Messiah, Jesus is He who died, and then he adds "yes, rather who was raised," and because He was raised He is at the right hand of God, interceding for us. You see what he's saying, he's saying that the resurrection means not only that God accepted the work of Christ and that now He lives and He appears in the presence of God on our behalf, pleading for us, pleading His work, continually applying it to our souls. The song says "Five bleeding wounds He bears received on Calvary, they pour effectual prayers, they strongly plead for me, forgive him oh forgive they cry, forgive him oh forgive they cry, nor let the ransomed sinner die." Jesus very presence make sure that our justification is forever.

Listen to Hebrews 7:25, "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him," why? "since He always lives to make intercession for them." This comes from the resurrection, the resurrection is the crucial cornerstone of the Christian gospel. You cannot be a Christian if you do not believe that Jesus was raised bodily from the grave. Why? Because that was the testimony that God had accepted His sacrifice and the result of it is His continual work on our behalf to secure our eternal redemption. That's what Paul says in Romans 10:9-10 you must believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead as well as confess him as Lord in order to be redeemed.

Now, I want you to get the big picture here. God asked Abraham to believe the bare word of His gracious promise, a gracious promise that said I'm going to spiritually bless you and people all over the world through you, even though you don't deserve it and I'm going to do that, through the Redeemer, through the gracious work of one of your descendants, the Messiah. And Abraham believed God, in spite of everything that pointed to the contrary. Beloved, what I want you to

understand is that it's exactly what you and I must do with the gracious promises of the gospel. Listen to Lloyd-Jones, please listen to this. This is the point, Lloyd-Jones writes, "you and I have got to believe something that is equally staggering to what Abraham was told, that Christ was delivered over for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. The Christian is like Abraham of old who believes the word of God in spite of everything that he knows to be true about himself. What is justifying faith? It is the faith that believes what God says in Christ, in spite of all I know about myself, my past sins, my present sinfulness, in spite of the fact I know that I still have an evil nature within me, that is the flesh which makes me say with Paul, "in me that is in my flesh dwells no good thing." Justifying faith is that which enables a man to believe the word of God in spite of all that, to believe the word of God in spite of knowing his own weaknesses, his own proneness to fall, his own proneness to fail, that is justifying faith."

Here's his admonition. "So stop talking about your past sins, stop talking about your present sinfulness. In this matter of justification, you must not mention them. You just stand as you are in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and in Him believe the staggering word of God about yourself. God justifies the ungodly."

This passage is for many here an invitation. It's an invitation to come to the place of being right with God the same way Abraham came to that place. Abandon all hope in yourself, abandon like the tax collector in Jesus' story, abandon your own righteousness, abandon any hope of being right with God by anything you do and like Abraham put your confidence in the work of the Redeemer, the One who would come to deal sin, who dealt with it even as we saw at this passage, whom God delivered over, delivered up for our transgressions, and Whom God raised for justification. Put your faith in the Redeemer, your hope of heaven, your hope of being right with God, completely in His work, abandon yourself to Him, and God will declare you righteous just as He did Abraham.

There's also great encouragement here and assurance, if you're already a Christian, if you've already come to that place. Paul wants you to know that God hasn't change. The same God who looked at the idolater, Abraham and credited righteousness to him because he believed the promise of the coming Redeemer, that same God has seen your faith, has created that faith and has seen it and has responded to it and He will credit righteousness to you. He has credited righteousness to you, believer. He wants you to have that confidence. It's the same God, it's the same gospel, it's the same Redeemer.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for the encouragement that it is to us who are in Christ the assurance that it brings. Lord, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever, You are always the One who is and this has always been Your way for us, sinful men and women to be right with You and we thank you that we can have assurance and confidence. We who have sought refuge in Christ. In the Redeemer, Messiah, the One who was promised, who came, and made an end to sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Father, I pray for those who, this morning, who have not yet come to trust in Christ, who have not repented of their sins, not put their faith in Him, Father, may they this day cry out to you like the tax collector in the story that You told. May they cry out, "Oh God, be propitiated to me, may Your wrath against my sin be satisfied in the sacrifice, the person of the Redeemer because I am the sinner. And Father, may they too this day experience the declaration that they are justified. Lord, do that we pray for Your glory, for the sake of Your Son in Whose name we pray, Amen.