

Romans – Crown Jewel of Salvation

10 - How Can You Get Right with God?

Romans 4:1-16

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Three of the most common **MISTAKES** that people make as they wrestle their way through the ‘How can I be right with God?’

I. You Can’t Get Right With God By Doing Good Works v. 1-8

Romans 4:1-2 “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something of which to boast, but not before God.”

Paul uses a "what if" argument in these opening verses. Just suppose you could be saved by doing good. If you could be saved by working for it then you could brag about it... ‘but not before God.’

Romans 3:27-28 “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”

The Bible hits on this topic so often because we’re incredibly self-focused! It’s in our very nature to try to find some way to take credit for most everything.

If you could be saved by good works then you could brag about it.

v. 2 *"...but not before God."*

A. It was Abraham's faith that made him righteous.

Genesis 15:6 “And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

Abraham trusted God, banked on God’s free mercy, looked away from his hopeless, ungodly self to God’s grace – and that faith was credited to him as righteousness.

Galatians 3:5-9 “Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

B. And God Credited or Accounted it to him as righteousness

The word ‘credited’ or ‘accounted’ is taken from the Greek word *‘logizomai.’* It literally means to compute or calculate. Abraham wasn't saved or justified by works. He believed. He had faith.

C. But What Does this Faith Look Like?

Rom. 4:5

1. "To him who does not work"

This phrase is a snapshot of the moment of justification. Justification is a verdict or declaration of God that happens in a moment when you put your faith in Christ: not guilty, acquitted, accepted, forgiven... and it has nothing to do with your works.

2. God justifies "the ungodly"

Romans 5:6 "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

God can justify the ungodly because his Son died for the ungodly. We are declared righteous by faith alone while we are still ungodly. Justification by faith does not make us righteous; it declares us righteous.

3. "His faith is accounted as righteousness"

Justification not based on his works or his love or even his fruit of faith, but his faith - his faith alone - is credited as righteousness.

II. You Can't Get Right with God By Doing Religious Rituals v. 9-12

In Paul's day, circumcision was the most important symbol of the Jewish nation. They thought the ritual of circumcision was a passport to heaven automatically.

v. 9-10 "Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised."

Genesis 15:6 says "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness."

- **Circumcision is a symbol or a sign, not a cause.**
- **The modern counterpart of circumcision today is baptism.** Baptism doesn't make you a believer, it shows that you're a believer.

v. 12 "And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had **while still uncircumcised.**"

Faith alone in His Son Jesus Christ is the only thing that can justify you in God's sight.

III. You Can't Get Right with God By Keeping the Law v. 13-16

Paul's already talked about this, but he uses Abraham again as an example.

v. 13 "For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

Keeping the Ten Commandments won't get you to heaven.

He's using Abraham to say, "Those of you who think you're going to make it to heaven by keeping all the rules of the Bible, need to realize that Abraham was made right with God before the laws were even given!"

You can't be made right with God through doing good works, and you can't be made right with God through religious rituals, and you're never going to be made right with God by keeping the Law.

IV. Saving Faith is the Only Way You Can Be Made Right with God v. 16

v. 16 he says, “Therefore –it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure...”

- It is of faith
- In accordance with grace (based on the foundation of grace)
- That the promise will be guaranteed or sure

Christ died to pay our debt... and to give us His righteousness. But you have to come to the end of yourself and trust the God who justifies the ungodly... and credits our sin as punished on the cross... and credits Christ's righteousness as being imputed to us.

- Do you want to be right with God?

Trust in the One who justifies the ungodly by grace alone... through faith alone... + nothing!

Eph. 2:4-9 “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)... that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”